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THE SHORT STORY'S MUTATIONS

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FROM PETRONIUS
TO PAUL MORAND

by

FRANCES NEWMAN

NEW YORK B. W. HUEBSCH, INC. MCMXXV

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PRINTED IN U. S. A.

Published November, 1924
Second printing, December, 1924
Third printing, January, 1925

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author and publisher gratefully acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs. Harper and Brothers and Mr. Henry James, in permitting the inclusion of The Private Life from the volume of the same title.

Thanks are due to Mr. Sherwood Anderson for I'm a Fool from his volume of tales entitled The Triumph of the Egg; to Mr. D. H. Lawrence for The Shades of Spring which appears in his The Prussian Officer, and to Mr. James Joyce for Ivy Day in the Committee Room from his Dubliners. Also to M. Paul Morand for the use of The Nordic Night from Ouvert la Nuit.

The English versions of stories from foreign languages are in all cases by Miss Newman.

THE SHORT STORY'S MUTATIONS

I

If love moves the sun and the other stars, as the Divine Comedy and the sun-dials say, the affairs of the planet for which its own inhabitants have found no more poetic name than Earth are less romantically arranged than the affairs of Venus and Mars. Such progress as the inhabitants of Earth may be said to have made is almost certainly due to that extreme degree of human intelligence called genius—and intelligence of that degree is probably somewhat rarer, even among our contemporaries, than the chronological patriotism of æsthetic and political journalists would have us believe. Any travelled person with a taste for old cemeteries must realize why regression is more likely than progress, and why men lived and died and built temples to strange gods for thousands of years before they built a Parthenon, and then lived and died and built temples to familiar gods for more thousands before they built a travesty of the Maiden's Chamber, and, with admirable if unconscious astuteness, dedicated it to the Holy Mary Magdalene.

In the very city of the Madeleine, in the vast and celebrated and unlovely cemetery called Père Lachaise, Russian and Polish and Italian and Irish refugees to the

intellectual sanctuary of Europe repose among Parisians and among refugees from Touraine and from Champagne and from Loire-inférieure. Among those ninety thousand mortal bodies, only some thirty or forty men and exactly four women are remembered except by filial piety —Alfred de Musset beneath his weeping-willow, Racine and Molière and Balzac and Oscar Wilde, Comte and Ingres and Corot, Chopin and Rossini, La Fontaine and the learned Abelard—two tragediennes, a soprano, and Héloise. A Frenchman finds genius among those tombs; and there are Englishmen who, quite incidentally, reveal their perfect appreciation of the refinements of the French language when they reveal their adoration of Racine's faultless alexandrines.

Over in Montmartre there are Stendhal and Renan. In Montparnasse there is Guy de Maupassant, and there is Baudelaire. Among the Carnots and Soufflots of the Panthéon, there is the great Voltaire, and there are Jean Jacques Rousseau and Victor Hugo. And in state that is not often solitary, the ashes of the celebrated Napoléon Bonaparte rest on the banks of the Seine, among the French people whom he loved so dearly. The proportion of genius to the mortal excelsior which surrounds it does not seem large, and its quality is not impressive.

But genius of the most exalted quality has not always been the greatest influence. Copernicus and Darwin and Professor Freud did not cause religious and psychological convulsions because they were greater men than Newton and Professor Einstein and Kant—not even because their theories were more destructive. The Copernican astronomy implied that when the sun stood still upon Gibeon and the moon stood still in the valley of Ajalon,

Joshua's influence on the sun was less remarkable than his influence on the moon. The Darwinian biology implied that God created man in his own image more than one day after he created the ape in man's image. And Professor Freud asked us to remember that we have most unfortunately acquired the spirits and intellects of men without discarding the bodies and appetites of animals. Even their authors could not be astonished when books which make it difficult for men to cling to their dearest illusions about themselves, their past dignity, and their future bliss, suffer more furious scribblings in public libraries than books which merely demonstrate that apples fall to the ground when they are detached from their boughs, that remote beds of gravity deflect rays of light, and that the moral law within us proves the doctrine of free-will and the existence of God.

The same lack of relation between the magnitude of genius and the magnitude of its effect is true in the arts, though for quite other reasons. Sir Sidney Lee could hardly say that Shakespeare was a greater influence in Europe than Byron, and Dmitri Merezhovski could hardly say that Leonardo da Vinci was a greater influence than Raphael. And Leonardo was probably the one man who can be called a great man—the others, excepting perhaps Plato and Goethe, are great poets or great sculptors or great philosophers. Leonardo is nature's justification for creating no more geniuses of the first magnitude. He does not seem to have enjoyed the world, and his influence did not go much beyond a strange smile on the lips of a few Milanese madonnas. The æsthetic saltations which result in the production of a new species are always the work of a man who can

transmit to his descendants his innate variations as well as his acquired characteristics; whether the mutation theory or the theory of the new Lamarckians is sound in biology, they are both sound in the arts. When a Masaccio—who had genius only for painting—is born, a new school of painting is born shortly afterwards. When a Wagner—who had genius only for composing—is born, a new school of music is born shortly afterwards. When an Ibsen—who had genius for drama unequalled since the death of Euripides—is born, a new school of drama is born shortly afterwards. And when a Henry James—who had genius for writing fictions which has never been equalled—is born, a new school of novels and of stories is born shortly afterwards.

I am not sure that a man can be born out of his due time any more than a day can dawn out of its due season, but if another Henry James could have been a contemporary of Plato's, he would probably have been only a particularly ingenious Sophist. If geniuses can be lost like kings and queens and treys and deuces turned up too early or too late in a game of patience, the difficulty of building up the world on its foundation of intellect, emotion, and art, may be caused by the difficulty of producing a Dante or a Francis of Assisi a hundred years before a Copernicus and a Voltaire a hundred years after a Galileo. Voltaire's Oedipe and his Zaïre descend serenely enough from Corneille and Racine, but if literary works had only literary ancestors, the evolution of his Candide and his Zadig from d'Urfé's simple-minded Astrée and Madame de La Fayette's extraordinarily virtuous Princess of Cleves would be an even more astonish-

ing example of mutation than the evolution of The Golden Bowl from The Marble Faun. When the creator of a new epoch in his art does spring laterally from its stem, nature has never any difficulty in producing accomplished craftsmen to work out the idea he has stated—a Wagner has always his Strauss, and a Voltaire's Anatole France is usually less belated.

These disciples inherit their masters' techniques, and they add their own; but only two of our world's foundations are as primary as blue and red—the emotional and the intellectual join in a curious osmotic union and become the æsthetic. The union is not tranquil, and the intellectual—which becomes the technical—is slowly, though not steadily, submerging the emotional—which now and then becomes the spiritual. Not because science is chilling our emotions—Aristide Maillol is not necessarily a less emotional person than Scopas, and James Joyce is probably not a less emotional person than Apuleius. Maillol has inherited the technique of forty centuries of sculpture, and Joyce has inherited the technique of twenty centuries of literature, and they have added their own. But since techniques cumulate and emotions do not, they have only their own emotion. The romantic which is the opposite of the realistic lives on only as the fantastic, except in decades like the eighteen thirties in France, when a flaming generation arises and drowns generations of technique in a magnificent burst of emotion, and the romantic which is the opposite of the classic died when the classic form became merely the right form. Our preoccupation with form is necessarily more serious than the interest of those centuries which had one unyielding form for each art—a dramatist

like Euripides, who knew that he could have only three actors on his stage at any one moment, and a poet like Boileau, who knew that his first iambic hexameter could not run over into the iambic hexameter which completed his inevitably rhyming couplet, were far freer from technical problems than a Chekhov, who created for each new play and each new story the form that its emotion demanded.

But even since the classic form became merely the right form, good stories are not often stories according to the definition of their day. The Private Life and The Nordic Night are not Short-stories according to the definition of the professors who say that a story may not receive the accolade of an initial capital letter and a connecting hyphen unless it follows some rules they have deduced from the practice of a certain American who deduced them from one story of Guy de Maupassant's—the celebrated Necklace, the only story of Maupassant's which ends with the celebrated shock in its last phrase. Like Julius Cæsar Scaliger and Jean Mairet, who discovered the Aristotelian unities two thousand years after the death of Aristotle, these professors would like to confine brief fictions in an inflexible form, which would indeed make teaching easier for instructors, writing easier for students, and criticism less hazardous for critics.

The only deduction that I can make from Maupassant —if a formula must come from Maupassant merely because a certain impropriety has caused his name to penetrate several cerebral strata—is that a story must have what Aristotle and the other Greeks called Peripeteia, and what their translators call Reversal of the Situation.

But the same formula which can be deduced from Maupassant's Jewels and his Butter Ball can be deduced —and no doubt was deduced—from The Matron of Ephesus and The Boy of Pergamum, told by the experienced Eumolpus for the diversion of his fellow voyagers in the Satyricon of Petronius Arbiter. When the first stories were told, presumably soon after the second ape stood erect, there was no æsthetic because there was no form and no emotion, but doubtless there was Reversal of the Situation—to the glory of the narrator. And when the first stories were written, they were written as stories that were told, around the camp-fire or on a galley's deck—in the innocent manner to which Joseph Conrad returned amid the world's applause. The narrator knew only what he had seen, or what his neighbour had seen. He had never thought of taking down the fourth wall of his hero's head and asking his audience to look in with him; he might never have thought of taking it down if divine revelations had not disclosed the inner histories of Zeus and Apollo and the nymphs and maidens who had the misfortune to find favour in their sight, and if there had not been Partheniuses to make of those Olympian amours the secular seductions of the Love Romances.

The Indian Jatakas and the Egyptian Book of the Dead and the Hebraic Book of Esther and their peers in antiquity give a learned air to introductory pages. And among occidental stories, particularly among these literary mutants which are more closely related to their descendants than to their ancestors, they would be no more remotely relevant than a discussion of the nebular hypothesis in a history of Rome. The dons of Oxford and

Cambridge and the doctors of Leipzig and Halle and of Turin and Paris agree that the Milesian tales, to which they disclaimingly refer as the erotic stories collected by Aristides of Miletus, would be the first examples of the European prose tale if they had not unfortunately been lost, and they are still finding new reasons for believing or for disbelieving that the tale we know originated in the indolent east or in the gradually decreasing divinity of Greek mythology. But I have never happened across a suggestion that the fondness for recounting their amorous conquests, which was probably no less indulged between the first two men than it is today, was perhaps the origin of a literary form whose history is also the history of the relations between men and women. That theory would account for its beginning in the egotistical first person; and fraternal exultation, rather than physiognomical improbability, would explain its passage to the altruistic third person.

The two Milesian tales saved for posterity in the Satyricon are admirable evidence for this theory, and still more admirable evidence that impropriety was no more essential to the earliest stories than Reversal of the Situation. By way of consoling Encolpius for the loss of Giton, Eumolpus rolled once more under his aged tongue the memory of the agreeable days when he was pedagogue to an amiable Pergamese adolescent. Eumolpus was no more than a minor poet, but, eighteen centuries before The Necklace, the turning of the tables which showed the completeness of his victory over the amiable youth's discretion was saved for the last phrase —no better suited to Anglo-Saxon readers than his other phrases, unfortunately, even since our novelists have

joined Huysmans and Marcel Proust in celebrating the pleasures that led to the composition of The Ballad of Reading Gaol. Eumolpus found no more inconsistency in following this recital of his own ingenuity in debauchery by a rebuke for the levity of the sex represented on the after deck by the gallant Tryphæna than King Francis the First found in scratching *Souvent femme varie* on his window at Chambord. His rebuke was that admirable example of Latin prose, The Matron of Ephesus—the earliest existing story which combines what was emotion in its day with what is still technique in our day, and becomes art.

THE MATRON OF EPHESUS

FROM THE SATYRICON OF PETRONIUS

A MATRON in Ephesus was of such notable chastity that women came from miles around to gaze on her. So, naturally, when her husband was buried she was not satisfied by the popular fashion of following a corpse with streaming hair, and beating the naked breast in front of the crowd: she went with the dead man into his very tomb, an underground sepulchre in the Greek style, and settled down to watch and weep day and night. Her parents and her other relations could not divert her from tormenting herself, or from leaving herself to die of hunger; the government officials finally went away discouraged, and she dragged through her fifth day without food, mourned by every one as the unique example for womankind. A faithful maid sat beside the miserable lady, wept just the proper number of tears with her, and kept the light in the tomb burning. Only this one tale went the rounds in the city, and people of every class agreed that it was an unrivalled example of chastity and love.

In the meantime, the governor of the province ordered some thieves crucified behind the little house where the widow was weeping over this corpse which had so lately been a man. A soldier was ordered to guard the crosses so that the bodies should not be taken down and buried, and the next night he saw the light shining clearly among

the trees, and heard the mourner's groans; he was as curious as other human beings, and he wanted to know who it was, and what was going on. So he went down into the vault; and when he saw a beautiful woman, he hesitated, as disturbed as if he had seen an omen or a spirit from the lower regions. But as soon as he noticed the prostrate body, the lady's tears, and her face torn by her own nails, he understood the reason—that she found her burning desire for the dead man unbearable. He brought his poor little supper into the tomb and began begging the weeping woman not to give herself up to useless grief, and not to break her heart with useless sobs: all men, he reminded her, came to the same end and the same last habitation. But she was annoyed by such plebeian condolences, and she struck her breast all the more violently, and tore off her hair to lay it on the body stretched before her. In spite of all that, the soldier did not go away; he tried to give the young woman some food, still with the same persuasion, until the maid was unable to resist the odour of the wine and put out her hand for the kindly offered supper. Then, restored by food and wine, she tried to overcome her mistress's resolution: "What good will you do," she asked, "if you do die of starvation, if you do bury yourself alive and die before Fate has asked for your soul? Do you think that your sorrow can please the body or the spirit of a man who is dead and buried? Why not begin life again? Why not shake off this mistaken idea of fidelity, which only women have, and enjoy the light of day as long as the gods permit? This very corpse should warn you to make the most of life." People usually listen when they are asked to eat or to live; the lady, hun-

gry and thirsty from five days of starvation, let her resolution be broken down, and ate as greedily as the maid who had yielded before her.

Well, you know what generally tempts a well-fed human being. The soldier began attacking the lady's virtue with the same insinuating language that had persuaded her to live. The chaste creature saw that he was a personable youth, and not stupid. The maid was sympathetic and quoted to her, "Will you struggle even against a love that delights you? Do you never remember in whose country you live?"

Why delay the story? Having conquered one part of the lady's person, the victorious soldier won the rest. They lay together not only their nuptial night, but the second, and the third, with the doors of the tomb closed, so that any friend or stranger who came there would suppose that this superlatively virtuous lady had expired on her husband's body. The soldier was delighted with the lady's beauty and with the secrecy of their love; he bought all the delicate food that his pay would allow, and took it to the tomb as soon as darkness fell.

The parents of one of the crucified men saw that the guard was careless, and took the body down to bury it. The next morning, when the soldier saw one of the crosses without its corpse, he realized what the penalty would be, and told his lady what had happened: he would kill himself with his own sword rather than wait to be condemned by a court-martial, and she must make room for her dying lover to join her husband in that fatal place. But the lady was as compassionate as she was chaste. "The gods forbid," she said, "that at the same moment I should see the dead bodies of the two men who

are most dear to me. Better to hang up a dead body than to kill a living man."

And in accordance with this speech, she told him that he must take her husband's body from its tomb and fasten it to the vacant cross. The soldier profited by the sagacious lady's ingenuity; and the following day, people wondered how the dead man had managed to crucify himself.

II

THE reasons why this agreeable story reflects so much more deeply on the matron's sex than on the soldier's are not mysterious, and a tale which is such admirable illustration of masculine belief in the faithlessness of the creatures whose faithfulness so often embarrasses them can hardly have originated as late in the world's history as the second century before Christ, when Aristides flourished in Miletus. Its descendants come down in an unbroken and still fertile succession. There is a version in the collection of oriental stories called The Seven Wise Masters, in which the widow is an even less desirable relict, and the source of La Fontaine's fable is the French fabliau of La Femme Qui Se Fit Putain sur la Fosse de Son Mari. There is Anatole France's suave adaptation of the Chinese tale of Madame Lu, who was discovered fanning the earth that covered Mr. Tao, whom she had sworn not to replace until the earth above him was dry. Anatole France's master, Voltaire, told a very similar story of the widowed Cosrou, whom Zadig's wife Azora found expiating a rash vow by turning the bed of a stream that had flowed beside her husband's tomb. Voltaire made his point and his model unmistakable when Zadig feigned death to test his Azora's affection, and just failed to lose his nose as poultice for an ailment of a certain Cador's spleen—an ailment that could only be soothed by this curious application—and no more than two years ago, Clement Wood gave the matron an

American name and an Austrian psychology and called her story The Coffin.

But a story's legitimate descendants are the descendants of its technique, not the descendants of its fable. And there are examples enough in stories more modern than the Satyricon of Reversals coincident with Recognitions, and with just the trivial and intimate Recognitions Aristotle described.

"Reversal of the Situation," he says, "is a change by which the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to the law of probability or necessity." And "Recognition, as the name indicates," he continues, "is a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune. The best form of Recognition is coincident with a Reversal of the Situation, as in the Œdipus." Aristotle then becomes a little dialectical—"There are indeed other forms. Even inanimate things of the most trivial kind may sometimes be objects of Recognition. Again, we may recognize or discover that a person has done a thing or that he has not done it. But the Recognition which is most intimately connected with the plot and the action is the Recognition of persons. This Recognition, combined with a Reversal, will produce either pity or terror; and actions that produce these effects are those which tragedy represents."

Undesirable infants like the young Œdipus were doubtless exposed often enough in the days when Petronius was Nero's arbiter of the elegancies—since the practice is still popular. But even if the diminishing durability of feminine charms had not made a Jocastan complication improbable, the Reversal of the Situation

was not the matron's lapse from legal to illegal love. That is inevitable in the Latin and in a translation which respects the verbal nicety of Eumolpus and records that the widowed lady's *burning desire* for her husband was unbearable. The Reversal was correctly coincident with the Recognition of her husband's cherished corpse on the thief's cross.

The celebrated Reversal in the celebrated Necklace has been producing pity and terror for fifty years by its last phrase recognition that Madame Loisel had sacrificed ten years and her charms to replace a necklace that was only paste. Madame Loisel was a virtuous Frenchwoman of the lower middle class. She can not have had any particular use for her charms, and five minutes after the story ended she was undoubtedly delighted that she had saved eighteen thousand francs for her declining years, and that Madame Forestier could hardly fail to heap benefits on her honourable friend. But the reader is not supposed to think of those alleviations of the tragedy—and so far as I know, neither the readers nor the writers of America ever have thought of them. Aristotle's requirement for tragedy is equally well adapted to romantic comedy—perhaps not deliberately —by Maupassant's most admired American disciple in a story called The Third Ingredient, which brings a lost lover back to his patient lady as the bearer of an onion for an Irish stew.

But no Reversal of a Situation coincident with a Recognition has charmed so many races or so many centuries as the Reversal of Cinderella's Situation when she took the glass slipper's mate from her ragged pocket, and left the proud sisters and the ashes for a throne.

The descendants of Cinderella's fable outnumber the matron's by hundreds, and its technical felicity was not surpassed in its own genre until Andersen wrote the peerless Ugly Duckling. Apuleius, whose Golden Ass bears more or less the same relation to the Satyricon that Roderick Random bears to Tristram Shandy, blended the story of Cinderella with an Olympian amour and achieved the story of Cupid and Psyche. Translated from the extravagant Latin of Apuleius into the cool violet prose of Walter Pater, it is strangely placed among the casually connected smolletries that join their pothouse Reversals and Recognitions in his extremely Milesian tale.

After Petronius and Apuleius, Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius and Longus wrote their indefinitely prolonged idylls of shepherds and shepherdesses without introducing one interlude that affected the short story. And after the fall of the Roman Empire in the West had saved Europe from even more Hellenistic degeneration, the Satyricon was a thousand years old before there was another story which had the merest historical interest. Painting and sculpture and the drama were waked from their millennium of sleep by the kiss of the Church, but story-telling became an art in a Christian world when the French jongleurs began to enliven the winter evenings of all the feudal orders. Reversal and Recognition were lost with fiction's other refinements, and middle class literature began a slow journey towards its triumphant apotheosis in the American magazine.

That was the day when a king who could sign his name to death-warrants and declarations of war was surnamed fine-scholar, and the jongleurs used rhyme and

metre for their one entirely reasonable purpose—mnemonic. But the tales of peasants, priests, and conjugal stratagems are so unmistakably the ancestors of the French conte and of the French novel that they are indispensable genealogical steps in the line that leads from Petronius to Paul Morand. Champagne and Picardy were the land of the fabliaux, and their hardy northern spirit shows for the first time that civilization was moving away from the pleasant shores of the Mediterranean. The *esprit gaulois,* that un-Latin, un-Teutonic temper which resulted from blending short skulls with long skulls, is officially declared by the Sorbonne to have three characteristics—*gaieté, malice, polissonnerie.* Gaiety and malice are characteristics that Anglo-Saxons also enjoy, but *polissonnerie* is as different from mere impropriety as Molière is from Congreve. Besides those three indestructible qualities, the fabliaux had a frank bravery and a self-respecting impertinence that French literature has not often regained since they were sacrificed to the classic revival. The engaging qualities of the peasant who persisted in entering heaven against the wishes of its holy porter are the qualities that distinguish the fictions of Voltaire and of Anatole France, and the heaven that was thrown into dialectics when the holy but short-sighted Maël baptized a whole island of soulless penguins is the same heaven into which a just God admitted the logical peasant.

The story of The Peasant Who Got into Heaven by Pleading—pleading in its strictly legal sense—is at once the most amusing and the least *polisson* of the fabliaux, and it is also good evidence for one of the two extraordinarily happy coincidences that rewarded

Joseph Bédier's mediæval researches with his country's gratitude and with a seat in his country's Academy. The chansons de geste, he decided after years of labour, were not nearly related to the German lieder—they could only have originated around the French abbeys and along the roads that led to the great French shrines. And his more recent studies compelled the conviction that very few of the fabliaux were necessarily of oriental origin, and that a great many of them could only have been born in France.

ABOUT THE PEASANT WHO GOT INTO HEAVEN BY PLEADING

A POOR peasant died, and he was so destitute, so obscure, that a most unlikely thing happened to him: no one in heaven or hell was warned of his death. I will not undertake to tell you how that could be; and besides, I know nothing about it. The only thing I do know is that by a singular chance, neither angels nor devils were there to claim his soul at the moment when it left his body. Alone then, and all in a tremble, our peasant set off without a guide; but he very sensibly thought that heaven was better worth finding than hell. Unfortunately, he did not know the road very well, and he was in great fear of losing himself; but as luck would have it, he saw the Archangel Michael conducting one of the elect to the abode of the blessed. The poor forsaken creature followed along behind him, and followed so successfully that he came up to the gate at the same time.

When Saint Peter heard the knock, he opened the gate to the beautiful angel and to his companion and let them pass in. But when he saw the peasant alone, he said, "Go away, go away. Nobody can come in here without a guide, and we don't want any peasants."

"Peasant yourself," the serf retorted, "you'd better be remembering that you denied Our Lord three times, instead of trying to drive decent people away from a place where they very likely have a right to stay. That's nice

behaviour for an apostle: God did himself great honour when he trusted the keys of his heaven with you."

Peter was little accustomed to such language, and he was so astonished that he went away without being able to answer. He met Saint Thomas, to whom he frankly related the mortification he had just suffered. "Let me manage this," said Thomas. "I'll find the clown and run him away." He did go to the gate, and dealt with the wretch harshly enough: how had he the face, he asked, to present himself at the abode of the blessed, where only martyrs and confessors ever entered?

"And what are you doing there, then?" the peasant answered, "you who wouldn't believe in the resurrection after it had been prophesied to you, you who had to be allowed to touch the wounds of Our Lord! Since unbelievers get in, I certainly can, I who have always believed as the faithful should." Thomas lowered his head at this reproach as Peter had done, and went shamefacedly back to find the gate-keeper of paradise.

Saint Paul happened by, and jeered at them when he heard their lamentations. "You know nothing about verbal communication," he told them. "I take my oath, by My Saviour, that I will avenge you and rid you of this serf who desires to abash you."

Then he advanced with a haughty air and took the peasant's arm to drive him away.

"Your manners do not surprise me at all," said the rustic. "Persecutor and spy on Christians, you always were a tyrant. God used all his wits as a worker of miracles, to mend your ways; and still he couldn't cure you of meddling, or keep you from quarrelling with Saint Peter, who was your superior. Listen to me, old

bald-head, and go back in. I'm no relation to Saint Stephen or to any of those decent people you had murdered; but don't forget that I understand you."

If any man ever expected an easy victory and was routed by a few brutal truths, that man was Saint Paul.

Completely out of countenance, he went back to Peter and Thomas, who saw that he was as much upset as they were, and decided that they must complain to the Eternal Father.

Saint Peter was spokesman. He asked for justice, and ended by saying that the peasant's insolence had mortified him so much that he would not dare go back to his post if he thought the man would be there.

"Very well, I will speak to him myself," said God. He went to the gate with them at once and called the peasant, who was still waiting, and asked how he came to be there without a guide, and how he had the assurance to stay after he had insulted the holy apostles.

"Lord, they wanted to drive me away, and I thought that I had as much right here as they have. I have not denied you, I have not doubted your holy word, and I have not had any one stoned or put in prison. People are not received here without judgment, I know. Very well, I submit myself to it: Lord, judge me. You had me born in poverty; I have borne my troubles without complaining, and I have worked all my life. I was told to believe in your gospel, and I have believed. I was instructed to do I don't know how many things, and I have done them. In short, during the life you gave me, I tried to live honestly, and I have nothing to reproach myself with. If the poor came to my house, I took them in and asked them to sit by the fire, and I shared with

them the bread I had earned by the sweat of my brow. You know, Lord, if I lie to you in the least thing. When I saw that I was dying, I made my confession and I received the sacraments. Our priest has always told us that if a man lived and died as I have done, heaven would be his reward, and I have come to ask it of you. Moreover, you let me come in yourself when you called me to answer you. Here I am, and here I should be allowed to stay, for you said in your gospel, remember, 'He has entered, so let him remain'; you are not capable of breaking your word."

"You have won your case," God said. "Stay here since you have spoken so well. There is what it is to have been at a good school."

III

In addition to its importance as a literary mutant, the fabulist's penetrating interpretation of the character of Saint Paul has theological importance as a remarkable premonition of the temper and the doctrines our more protestant churches have derived from the doctrines of that posthumous old testament prophet. The Church was truly and almost serenely catholic in those days, philosophy was theology's unaspiring handmaiden, and jongleurs were not the only men who dared to speak of their God with the confiding familiarity common to the childhood of men and the childhood of races untroubled by totems and taboos. Saint Peter's successor and his spirit ruled the Christian world, and the spirit of Saint Paul was yet to speak again with the voice of Savonarola.

The language of the Gauls was slowly blending with the language of the Romans when the fabliaux were composed, and the characters of the Romans and the Gauls were tenanting the same bodies without blending. The language and the character of the Saxons were slowly blending with the language and the character of the Normans when the second Gesta Romanorum was compiled in England, and if the apocryphal deeds of equally apocryphal Roman emperors were once Arabic, they are as much at home in English literature as Arabic numerals are in English counting-houses. They are supposed to have been collected for the use of preachers who already found illustration easier than exposition, and, in the fash-

ion of our own cinema, the compiler chose tales that were quite pagan and justified their telling by the exemplary Christian morals he evolved from them. The stories and their pious moralities are certainly not the first examples of a trait so human as hypocrisy; but they are the first influential examples of Christian cant, and the casket story, the story of the money-lender who became Shylock, the story of the aged monarch who became Lear, and all the other gesta that have given plots to Shakespeares and Schillers, have left lighter traces of their stories than of their spirit.

The tale of the Emperor Annuus, who drew the thorn out of the limping lion's foot and who fortunately met the grateful creature when he was flying from the lady bear whose intimate acquaintance he regretted having made, received even greater sanctification than its own morality. It became the pious tale of the Christian Androcles, who drew a thorn out of a limping lion's foot and who was fortunately thrown to that particular lion in a roaring coliseum. It may even have become the story of Saint Jerome, whose grateful lion was faithful through the moment of extreme unction, as a thousand Italian canvases testify.

Boccaccio and the compiler of the Gesta were contemporaries, but in spite of Goths and Visigoths and Vandals Italy had never quite ceased to be Rome, and the Italian states were never mediæval in the way that England and France and Germany were mediæval. The country of the Romans wrote in the language of the Romans until Dante created Italian prose in the Vita Nuova and Boccaccio created Italian fiction in the Decameron. Boccaccio had created half a dozen other

literary mutants—the Filocopo was the first novel, the Ameto was the first modern pastoral, the Fiammetta was a prophecy of the psychological novel, and the Corbaccio was the precursor of lampoons addressed to many other ladies by jilted lovers. The fourteenth century still seems to have thought that a tale could not reasonably be told without some one to tell it, though the Gesta's compiler had only the justification of supplying his fellow preachers with pleasant anecdotes and pleasant moralities. When Boccaccio had a hundred French and Italian and oriental tales to tell, he introduced into Europe the ancient device that is usually called a frame. And like a true son of the renaissance, he made his oriental device classic, rational, and beautiful. Instead of a Scheherazade who pacified her uxorcidal sultan with a new story for a thousand and one nights, or seven wise masters whose stories convinced their king that murdering his own son was inexpedient, the first Greek scholar of Florence set his stories in the most charming scene literature has seen since Socrates and Phædrus talked of love under the plane-tree beside the Ilissus, and Socrates and Glaucon and Polemarchus and Thrasymachus talked of the ideal republic in a garlanded peristyle of the Piræus. Boccaccio framed his hundred stories in an Italian garden, and ten ladies and gentlemen of Florence sat on its green grass and told his tales while the sun was high and the silence was broken only by the cicalas among the olive-trees and the delicious splash of the fountain falling into its basin of whitest marble.

The Italian of the Vita Nuova and the Decameron has successfully resisted the erosion of popular speech for six centuries, and although the Italian dialects have

doubtless helped to save the literary language, Dante and Boccaccio must have created a language that could express all the ideas and all the emotions the Italian mind had to express until it showed all the riches of a bursting pomegranate in the hands of Annunzio. The Vita Nuova was poetry in everything except form, but the Decameron has the quality that will always make prose more civilized than verse—the quality of irony. The story of Abraam's conversion is only one of the stories which astonish people who have never heard that Boccaccio had any other recommendation than impropriety—stories that are broadly, classically ironic, not ironic with the intimate Gallic cynicism of Voltaire. But in the story of the Count of Antwerp, one of the uncountable heroes of Greek and mediæval and renaissance fictions whom slighted ladies accused of the crimes they had resisted, there is a sentence that Voltaire might almost have written—"Who would deny that a poor woman who earns her bread by the sweat of her own brow is far more reprehensible in yielding to the solicitations of love than a highly-placed lady who has always had every luxury she could wish?" And just before Elisa told the unfortunate count's story, Pamfilo told the story of a certain sultan of Babylonia whose daughter Alatiel was by common consent the most beautiful woman then to be found in the world. This young lady was placed aboard a well-furnished ship and sent off to wed the King of Garbo, but by divers adventures she came in the space of four years into the hands of nine men in divers places. She was restored to her father at last in the guise of a virgin, and happily married to the King of Garbo. This Ephesian tale, except for its more

cheerful ending and its lack of Voltairean nudges, is the story the old woman with the scarlet-rimmed eyes told to the optimistic Candide and the fair Cunegonde on their voyage to Buenos Ayres.

If Boccaccio could have been born after Columbus and Copernicus had voyaged and observed, he need not have been terrified into mending his ways when a holy Carthusian monk was vouchsafed a death-bed vision of Boccaccio in hell. And Italy might not have waited for its first distinguished satire until Pirandello wrote Six Characters in Search of an Author.

THE TALE OF THE EMPEROUR, THE LYON, AND THE BERE

FROM THE GESTA ROMANORUM

ANNUUS reigned in the Citee of Rome, the whiche amonge all the goodes of the world he loved mekell to playe with houndes and hawkes. It fille ones, that he went to a forest, forto hunte the hert; and sone he sawe an herte come rynnyng before hym, and houndes rynnyng after hym, in so mekell that he was left behynde, that he saw neither the herte ne the houndes; and so he beleft alone, for all his servauntes folowed the herte. and he was mekell desolate and hevy, for he saw no man; And anon smote the horse with the sporres, agayn none, and he rode through all the forest, and found no man. But agayn even come rynnyng a lyon haltyng on his right foote, and come to hym. the Emperour was aferd, and would have fledde, but the lyon toke hym by the foote, and showed to him the hurt on his foote. whan the Emperour vndirstode that, he went downe of his horse, and drew out the sharpe thorn out of the lyons foot; and after that he gadred herbes, with the whiche he heled his foote. When the lion was hole, he lad hym to his cave, and there he was all nyght. and on the morrow he bowed his hede to the lyon, and toke his horse, and rode all that day, and could in now wise passyng out of the forest. he sawe that, and went agayn to the lions denne. the lyon was out, but agayn Even

he come, and brought with him .ij. fat shepe; and whan he found the Emperour, after his kynde he made hym good cher, and offred him both the shepe. The Emperour was hungry, because he had not eten all day; he toke an Iren, and smote fire of a stone, and araied hym flesh, and Ete, and dranke watir of the floode; and so he lay all night with the lyon. On the day folowyng he lept on his palfray, and rode all day, and could find no goyng out of the forest, wherfore he was hevy and sory. Este sones he went to the lyons denne, but he found not the lyon; and agayn Even come a female Bere to hym; and whan he saw her, he was gretely aferd. but the Bere made hym chere in her maner, and of the pray she goten and take, she layed it before hym. he smote fire, and araied it, and ete; and after that he had eten, thei layen both to-gedre. and the Emperour knew her fleshly, and she brought forth a sone, like the Emperour. than the Emperour would have fled, but he durst not, for the bere; But este sones he knew her, and she brought forthe the second sone, that was like the Emperour. The third time he knew her, and she brought forth a doughtir, that was like the modir, the bere. that sawe the Emperour, and was wondir sory. It fille on a day, that when the Bere was ferre gone, for to take her preye, the Emperor toke his .ij. sones, that he had goten of the Bere, with hym, and fledde; and whan he was in fleyng, The lyon, that he had heled before, come agayn hym, and ledde hym out of the forest. The Bere come home, and whan she found not the Emperour, she ranne fast with her doughtir. and whan she sawe the lyon by hym, she was aferde, and durst not come nere hym; but toke her doughtir, and rent her all

to peces, and went agayn to her place. The Emperour, whan he was come out of the forest by the lyon, he was right gladde; And than the lyon went from hym. Than the Emperour went to his owne Castell, with his .ij. sones. the dukes and the lordes and all other wise men were right gladde, for of .iij. yere thei hed not sene the Emperour. the sones, whan thei were come to age, were made knyghtes, and were stronge werriours, and wente aboute in many strange londes, and goten mekell good by dynte of sword; and after in pease thei ended their lyves; and bothe thei died on one day, and in one grave were buried; and on the stone of her grave was this scripture, Here lieth .ij. sones of the Bere, whiche the Emperour gate with drede.

Declaracio. Frendes, this Emperour may be said every cristen man that is vayn, waveryng, and erryng fro the faithe, that playeth with houndes, that is, with lustes of the flesh, that in no maner renten the soule. the herte rynneth before suche one, that is, the vanyte of the world. that man vnwise folowith with all his myght, in so mekell that he lyveth alone, with out any vertu. after this he gothe alone into the forest of this world, whan vtterly he putteth all his witte and vndirstondyng in it, in so mekell that he maketh no force of gode, ne of thyng that longeth to god. But the lyon haltyng cometh agayn hym. This lyon is crist, that halteth in the foote, that is, in man that is his membre; for he is hede, and we are his membres. man halteth as ofte as he lyveth in poverte, or in tribulacion. Do thou therefore as the Emperour did; come down of the horse of pride, and the thorne of poverte, or of tribulacion do thou therefore drawe out fro hym, That is, yeve hym almesse, and

shew hym the way of helthe, and than hast thou drawen out the thorne of the foote; as our Lord seith, That ye done to one of the lest of myne, ye done it to me. Afterward the lyon fedde the knyght in the forest. So crist forsaketh not a synner, but that he fedeth hym with his grace, that he falle not into helle; as it is written in the psalme, I am with hym in tribulacion. Therfore he yeveth to the synner .ij. Shepe, that is, tyme of penaunce, and tyme, that is, grace, of rysyng, by the which he may gostly be susteyned. But often aftir, this wrecched man that knoweth not the way out of the forest, that is, out of the world, he knoweth not what deth he shall dye, or where, or how, but rynneth to the Bere, that is, to the fleshly lustes; with the whiche he doth synne, that is, he hathe delite of the bere, of the which he hathe goten .ij. Sones and a doughtir. The .ij. sones are concupiscence of lyf and concupiscence of Eyen, that are likened to a synner. The doughtir, that was like to the Bere, is the sensualite in man, that is always redy to evell; as is in Genesyes written, The wittes of man are all way prone to evell at all tymes. wherfor god said, It ever forthynketh me, that I made man; I shall for-do hym, that is, the steryng of the sensualite are done away with cristes passion. do thou therefore as the Emperour did; flee with the .ij. sones to a discrete confessour; and yf the bere, that is, fleshly luste, folow the with the sensualite, drede not, but have all way god in they eyen. Than anon the lion, that is, crist, shall come to the agayn, yf thou call hym, wherfor he seith, seketh, and ye shull fynde; knokketh, and it shall be opened to you. and yf god be with you, the bere shall flee, that is, temtacion; and so shalt thou come to the chirche, that is,

fightyng, in the whiche thou shalt be received; of the whiche comyng from synne and doyng of penaunce is a more new Ioye in hevene to aungels, than of nynte and nyne rightfull men that neden no penaunce. The .ij. sones shall be .ij. knyghtes, workyng good werkes, with the whiche thei shull do dyverse batailes ayenst the devell; and after thei shull be buried in oo tombe, that is, in perfite charitee, for the which man shall have the kyngdome of heven. Amen.

ABRAAM GOES TO THE COURT OF ROME

BY BOCCACCIO

In Paris, gracious ladies, as I have heard tell, there was once a dealer in silks called Giannotto di Civigni, who had a great friendship for a rich Jew called Abraam, also a merchant, and also an honest and loyal man. Now Giannotto, knowing Abraam's honesty and loyalty, began to grieve that so worthy and wise and virtuous a soul should go to hell for lack of the true faith. Wherefore, in the most loving manner, he began pleading with him to leave the Jewish faith and turn to the Christian verity: he could see for himself that it was prospering and increasing, and that his religion, on the contrary, was dwindling away and was almost come to nothing.

Abraam answered that he believed no faith was sound and holy except the Jewish faith in which he was born, and in which he meant to live and die. But that did not cause Giannotto to refrain from repeating the same arguments a few days later, or from expounding to him in a merchant's crude fashion the reasons why our faith is better than the Jewish. And though Abraam was learned in the Jewish law, either he was moved by his great friendship for Giannotto or by the words which the Holy Ghost put in the mouth of a simple merchant; at any rate, he began to be very much interested by Giannotto's arguments, but he was still too much attached to his own beliefs to wish to leave them.

Giannotto was more persistent in urging them than

Abraam was in resisting. Overcome by such incessant appeals, he said, "Well, Giannotto, you would have me become a Christian, and I am disposed to do it; but first I must go to Rome and see him whom you call Christ's Vicar on earth, and observe his manners and his customs, and also the manners and customs of his brother cardinals. And if they be such that because of them and of your arguments I can believe that your faith is better than mine, I will become a Christian. If not, I will remain a Jew as I am."

When Giannotto heard this, he was immeasurably distressed, and said to himself, "I have had all my trouble for nothing, when I thought to have converted him by my arguments. If he goes to the court of Rome and sees the foul and wicked lives of the clergy, he will not only never become a Christian; if he had already been converted, he would without doubt return to the Jewish religion."

Turning to Abraam, he said aloud, "No, my friend, why suffer so much fatigue and expense in going to Rome? Besides, travel either by land or by sea is dangerous for a man as rich as you are. Do you think that you can find no one here to give you baptism? And if you have any doubts concerning the faith I have expounded to you, where will you find wiser or more learned men to answer the questions you may put to them? It seems to me, therefore, that this journey would be superfluous. Only realize that the prelates there are much like those you see here, and even better since they are near the Chief Pastor. By my advice, you will spare yourself this fatigue until some time of indulgence when I can bear you company."

To all of which Abraam answered, "I believe, Giannotto, that these things are as you say, but once and for all I tell you that I mean to go there, or never to do what you have so steadily besought."

Giannotto saw his determination, and said, "Good luck go with you." He said to himself that Abraam would never become a Christian after he had seen the court of Rome, but that nothing would be lost by his going.

Abraam mounted his horse, and rode as rapidly as possible to the court of Rome, where his fellow Jews received him honourably. He told no one why he had come, but he began circumspectly to look into the ways of the Pope and the cardinals and the other prelates and the courtiers. From what he saw for himself, being a shrewd man, and from what he was told by others, he found that the great and the lowly were equally sinful and wanton, not only in the way of nature, but also in sodomy, and without remorse or shame; and the influence of the courtesans and the boys was of no small power when any great favours were to be procured. Moreover, he found them all gluttonous, wine-bibbing, drunken, and, after lewdness, most given to the stomach's service, like so many brute beasts.

And, looking further, he saw that they were all so avaricious and so greedy that they trafficked in human, even in Christian blood. They sold more sacred and temporal things and employed more merchants than all the drapers and the other traders in Paris together. Open simony was called arrangement and gluttony was called nourishment, just as if God did not know a wicked soul and as if he could be deceived by names as men are. These matters, with many other unspeakable things, were

extremely displeasing to this sober-minded and modest Jew. He thought that he had seen enough, and he was ready to go back to Paris, which he did.

When Giannotto heard that Abraam had returned, he had not the smallest hope of his conversion. They made a great feast together, but he waited some days before he asked Abraam what he thought of the Holy Father and of the cardinals and the other courtiers.

To this, the Jew answered forthwith, "It seems to me that God owes them nothing but punishment. I tell you that as far as I was able to discover there is neither holiness, piety, good works, nor the example of a virtuous life in any clerk. Lewdness, avarice, gluttony and the like, or worse, if worse there be, are held in such honour by all that I found it rather a forge of diabolical than of divine works. For this reason it seems to me that your Pastor and all the others are endeavouring with every care and every ingenuity and every art to bring the Christian religion to nothing and to drive it from the world, instead of being its foundation and support. And because I saw that in spite of their industry your religion increases and shines more and more clearly, I believe that the Holy Ghost must be its foundation and support, and that it must be true and holy as no other religion is. For which cause, though I was harsh and obdurate and would not become a Christian in spite of all your arguments now I tell you that I would on no account fail to become a Christian. Let us go together to church and there I will receive baptism according to the rites of your religion."

Giannotto, who had expected exactly the opposite conclusion, was the happiest of men when he heard Abraam's

words. He took him to Notre Dame, and asked the clergy there to give him baptism.

When the clergy heard that it was Abraam's own wish, they did so at once, and Giannotto raised him from the holy font, and named him Giovanni. After this, Giannotto caused teachers of the greatest eminence to instruct him thoroughly in our faith, which he readily learned, and he lived henceforth a good and virtuous, even a saintly life.

IV

The story of Abraam's conversion would be the first notable Italian satire if the last sentence did not show so clearly that Boccaccio was not quite aware of its fundamental irony—if it did not prove again, as Petronius had proved when he put the matron's story in the mouth of Eumolpus, that only a Leonardo da Vinci ever sees beyond the horizon of his century. A modern instructor in the science of story telling would certainly end the tale with the swift Reversal of Abraam's surprising declaration that he would on no account fail to become a Christian, but even with its leisurely ending, the instructor could hardly fail to see that Boccaccio did something more than bring the mediæval story back to the technical felicity of Petronius when he combined admirable construction with sympathy and irony and produced a modern story.

If a perfectly conscious irony was impossible in a century whose cosmogony had room for a heaven and a hell and a purgatory, Boccaccio's tales still support the tradition that his mother was a Frenchwoman. Italy has only his Decameron and Spain has only Don Quixote and Germany has not one high comedy that another writer would be unable to enjoy for grieving that he had not written it. France has a magnificent line of humorists that begins with Rabelais, and that becomes a line of satirists with Voltaire and goes on through Anatole France to Paul Morand. And England has a line that

should have begun with Chaucer, but an undue aptitude for verse delayed it to begin with Defoe, to become satire with Swift, and to go gloriously on through Sterne and Jane Austen to Max Beerbohm and Compton Mackenzie and half a dozen young Georgians.

Those five literatures are surely fair evidence that nations in whom two races have never quite blended are likely to produce individuals who enjoy an incapacity for passionate belief which produces a suavely ironic prose, and that the Norman and the Saxon have blended more harmoniously in the English than the Roman and the Gaul have yet blended in the French. Incapacity for passionate belief is not merely a question of believing or disbelieving that the pope of Rome is infallible or that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary—a passionate belief that there is one God and Mohammed is his prophet or that man was not evolved from the ape by natural selection is not more damaging to a prose style than a passionate belief in the categorical imperative, in society's depravation of the natural man or in the necessity of Americanization for undesirable aliens. France has paid for her Rabelais and her Voltaire and her Diderot with a definite lack of nobility in her literature—a lack of Dantes and Tolstois and Goethes—but she has made modern prose and modern fiction and the modern history and the modern story, and Voltaire made them for her.

The cynical shape of Voltaire's skull alone could not have created Voltaire's carbolic prose. In the fourteenth century, when a thunder-storm was as mysterious as a divine revelation, and when there were not enough

convictions to furnish doubts, Boccaccio had no use for whatever natural incredulity he may have had except the capacity for looking about him and seeing that the world was no particular credit to an omnipotent God or to his Vicar on earth. Candide was written four hundred years after the Decameron, and in those four hundred years Columbus discovered San Salvador, and Copernicus discovered that the Earth is not the centre of the universe. Galileo looked at a swinging cathedral lamp instead of saying his prayers and whispered that, in spite of the Holy Inquisition's wishes, the Earth moves. Newton discovered that the Earth rose to meet the descending apple and—what impressed the acquisitive Voltaire even more—got himself buried in Westminister Abbey. Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the church door and married a nun, and Erasmus wrote In Praise of Folly. The episode of Oliver Cromwell and King Charles the Martyr left no doubt that crowned heads are not inseverably attached to their bodies. Philosophy ceased to be the handmaiden of theology and became the consort of science. And Gutenberg invented the art of printing books from movable type and the world learned to read them and to enjoy less corporeal diversions than the characters and the contemporaries of Boccaccio could have imagined.

Voltaire had the advantage of inheriting the dawning doubts of four centuries, and of observing a king who did more to make monarchy ridiculous than any other divinely appointed ruler accomplished between Nero and William the Second; and he had the advantage of a literary début which encouraged his cynical view of his

fellow men in the personally injurious way that is so much more effective than any amount of impersonal imbecility. When Voltaire was nineteen years old, the immortals of the French Academy preferred to crown a poem of a certain Abbé Dujarry's instead of an ode of Voltaire's. And nearly twenty-five years later, Voltaire was still quoting one of the abbé's hexameters concerning a journey from the earth's burning poles to the earth's frozen poles, and the verdict of a certain academician called Monsieur de Lamotte, who had said that the temperature of the poles was a matter for the Academy of Sciences, not for the French Academy, that he was not sure there were no burning poles, and that in the first place the Abbé Dujarry was one of his friends.

Aristotle's astronomical authority had been ended by Copernicus, but his literary authority was still absolute and Monsieur de Lamotte was doubtless leaning on his declaration that if a poet represents a horse throwing out both his off-legs at once or introduces technical inaccuracies in medicine, the æsthetic merit of the poem is not impaired by an error which is not essential to the poetry. Voltaire should not have protested against any judgment supported by the words of Aristotle—like most of our own literary journalists, Voltaire was a theological and a political atheist; and also like them, he was a literary conservative who wrote correct tragedies in the manner of Racine and Corneille, and in alexandrines so accurate that his dramas must always remain unknown to the persons who find the even rocking of their rhyming couplets as distressing as the even rolling of a ship at sea.

But when the French writers of the seventeenth century chilled French drama forever by joining the Ital-

ians in imitating Seneca's dead imitations of the Greeks, fiction was happily not a literary form of enough importance to be destroyed by rules. Also happily for Voltaire, Fontenelle wrote and conversed of philosophy clearly and simply and charmingly, and even great ladies began to understand the less mathematical ideas of Descartes and the Cartesians and to remark that the inexplicable was only the unexplained. And also happily for Voltaire, who wished to be a successful courtier only less than he wished to say and to write all the unflattering things that he thought and whom a sincere attachment to peace and comfort could never prevent from speaking out against injustice and misery, the Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales were translated into French in the early eighteenth century, and oriental tales and oriental turbans became the fashion at Versailles and Fountainebleau. Voltaire had a public whose thought was ready to advance with his thought, and the oriental tale which presented the vagaries of Paris and Versailles in the latitude of Morocco became the perfect allegory for a writer whose best phrases always faced two ways.

If Voltaire was not the first writer who practised the delicate art of innuendo, he was the first writer whose words laid a smoothly lacquered surface over his acrimonious animus, and the old woman's reminiscence of her youthful sorrows is the first brief fiction whose form is as casual as its emotion and whose pleasantly malicious subauditions are the charm of its satire. The fallen Princess of Palestrina recounted the violent Reversal of her Situation in the third paragraph of her lamentable history, when her soldiers threw down their arms and defended themselves like soldiers of a pope, and the story ends

with some philosophical remarks about the unreasonably small number of suicides in the world. For the first time, an author realized that his spirit and his style were more important to his readers than his story.

THE OLD WOMAN'S STORY

BY VOLTAIRE

"I DID not always have blood-shot, scarlet-rimmed eyes; my nose did not always touch my chin; and I was not always a slave. I am the daughter of Pope Urban the Tenth and of the Princess of Palestrina. Until I was fourteen years old, I lived in a palace for which your German barons' castles would not have served as stables, and one of my gowns was more valuable than all the magnificence of Westphalia. I grew in beauty, in charms, and in talents, in the midst of rejoicing, homage, and hope; I was already beginning to inspire love; my breast was formed, and what a breast! white, firm, formed like the Venus de Medici's! and what eyes! what eyelashes! what black eyebrows! flames burned in my eyes and dimmed the scintillation of the stars, as one of the poets of the neighbourhood said to me. The women who dressed me and undressed me fell into ecstasies, and all the men would have liked to change places with them.

"I was betrothed to a sovereign prince of Massa-Carrara: what a prince! as handsome as I was, made of sweetness and charms, sparkling with wit, and burning with passion. I loved him as one loves for the first time, with idolatry, with abandon. Our nuptials were prepared, and they were of unprecedented dignity and magnificence: there were continuous feasts, tournaments, and operas. Every poet in Italy made a sonnet in my honour, and not

one of them was even passable. I was on the threshold of my happiness when an old marchioness who had been my prince's mistress asked him to drink chocolate with her. In less than two hours, he died in the most frightful convulsions: but that is a mere trifle.

"My mother was very much vexed, though she was far less concerned than I was, and insisted on tearing herself away from such a melancholy abode. She had a very pretty country house near Gaeta, and we set sail for it in a galley that glittered like the high altar of Saint Peter's in Rome. A corsair from Morocco overtook us, and the pirates boarded our galley. Our soldiers defended themselves like soldiers of a pope: they threw down their arms, fell on their knees, and implored the pirates to grant them absolution *in articulo mortis*. Instead, the pirates stripped them as naked as so many monkeys, and my mother also, our maids of honour also, and myself also. It was truly admirable, the dispatch with which those gentlemen undressed us all; but what surprised me more than that was the unusual nooks and crannies they pried into. This ceremony seemed very odd to me, but everything seems odd to people who have never been out of their own country before. I soon learned that it was to see if we had any diamonds hidden about us, and that it is a very old custom in the highly civilized nations which rove the seas. I have even heard that those pious gentlemen, the Knights of Malta, never fail to follow their example when they capture Turkish men and women, and that it is an international law which has never been repealed.

"I will not stop to tell you how hard a young princess finds being led captive to Morocco along with her

mother: you can imagine for yourselves all we suffered on the pirate ship. My mother was still very beautiful, our maids of honour, our mere chamber-maids, had more charms than one could find in the whole of Africa. As for me, I was ravishing: I was beautiful, I was grace itself, and I was a virgin—but not for long. That flower, which had been reserved for the handsome Prince of Massa-Carrara, was snatched from me by the captain; he was a loathsome negro, who nevertheless felt that he was doing me great honour. Certainly, the Princess of Palestrina and I must have had strong constitutions to survive everything that tested them before our arrival in Morocco! But we will pass over that: those things are so usual that they aren't worth talking about.

"Morocco was swimming in blood when we arrived. Each of the Emperor Muley-Ismaël's fifty sons had his supporters; naturally enough, the result was fifty civil wars of blacks against blacks, blacks against tans, tans against tans, mulattoes against mulattoes: there was continual slaughter all over the empire.

"We had hardly landed when the negroes of a party that was at war with my captain appeared to rob him of his booty. After the diamonds and the gold, we were the most valuable things he had. I saw such a battle as you never would see in your European climates. Northern people are not so hot-blooded; they haven't the passion for women that is universal in Africa. Your Europeans seem to have nothing more than milk in their veins; vitriol, even fire, flows through the veins of the inhabitants of Mount Atlas and the countries round about. They fought over us as furiously as the lions and tigers and serpents of their native land. A Moor

seized my mother by her right arm, my captain's lieutenant held her by her left arm; a Moorish soldier caught her by one foot, and one of our pirates dragged her back by the other. Nearly all our maids found themselves pulled four ways by four soldiers. My captain kept me hidden behind him; he had his scimitar in his hand, and killed every man who tried to take me from him. I lived to see every one of our women and my own mother torn, hacked, murdered, by the monsters who were fighting for their possession; my fellow captives, their captors, the soldiers, the sailors, the blacks, the tans, the mulattoes, and last of all my captain—every one of them was killed, and I was left dying among the dead. Scenes like that happen every day, in every one of the country's three hundred leagues, and not a single person misses the five prayers a day Mohammed commanded.

"I managed to disentangle myself, and then I crawled over to a great orange tree on the bank of a stream not far away; I was overcome by fright, by weariness, by horror and by despair and hunger, and I fell into a sleep that was really more like a swoon. I was in that state of weakness and insensibility, somewhere between life and death, when I felt myself touched by something that was moving over me. I opened my eyes, I saw a man who was white and who had a pleasant face; who was sighing, and who was saying under his breath, *'O che sciagura d'essere senza coglioni!'*

"Surprised and delighted to hear my own language, and no less surprised at the words of the language that the man was speaking, I told him that there were troubles worse than the one he was complaining of; in a few words I informed him of the horrors I had endured, and

then I fainted again. He carried me into a neighbouring house, had me put to bed and given something to eat, tended me, comforted me, caressed me, told me that he had never seen anything as beautiful as I was, and that he had never regretted his misfortune so much.

" 'I was born in Naples,' he told me, 'where the people are so musical that every year they sacrifice the manly vigour of two or three thousand little boys. Some of the boys die, some of them acquire voices more beautiful than women's, and some of them govern the country. My operation was very successful, and I was a singer in the Princess of Palestrina's chapel.'

" 'My mother!' I exclaimed.

" 'Your mother!' he exclaimed, weeping. 'Can you be the young princess I taught until she was six years old, who promised to be as beautiful as you are?'

" 'The very same, and my poor mother is not four hundred feet from here, lying dead among the dead . . .'

"I told him everything that had happened to me, he told me what had happened to him, and that a Christian power had sent him to the ruler of Morocco for the purpose of concluding a treaty by which the Christian power would provide that monarch with enough powder, guns, and ships to destroy the commerce of various other Christians. 'My mission is accomplished,' said the honest eunuch. 'I am about to embark at Ceuta, and I will take you back to Italy. *Ma che sciagura d'essere senza coglioni!*'

"I thanked him with tears of gratitude, and instead of taking me to Italy, he carried me off to Algiers, and sold me to the dey of that country. He had just sold me when the plague which has made the rounds of Africa,

Asia, and Europe broke out with fury in Algiers. You have been in earthquakes, but, my lady, have you ever had the plague?"

"Never," answered the baroness.

"If you had," the old woman went on, "you would admit that an earthquake is nothing in comparison, but it is a common complaint in Africa, and I was stricken. Picture for yourself the situation of a pope's daughter, barely fifteen years old, who in three months time had encountered poverty and slavery; who had been violated nearly every day, who had seen her own mother cut into four pieces, who had survived starvation and war, and who at the moment was dying of the plague in Algiers. I didn't die of it, however; but my eunuch and the dey and almost the entire royal seraglio perished.

"After the first ravages of that calamitous plague, the dey's slaves were sold. A trader bought me, and took me to Tunis; he sold me to another trader who sold me to Tripoli; from Tripoli I was sold to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Smyrna, from Smyrna to Constantinople. Finally I was passed on to an aga of the janissaries, who was soon afterwards sent to defend Azof against the Russians. The aga was so partial to women that he took his whole seraglio with him, and lodged us in a little fort by the sea of Azof, with two black eunuchs and twenty soldiers to guard us. The janissaries killed quantities of Russians, but the Russians killed quantities of them: Azof was put to fire and sword, and women and patriarchs and babies were butchered as casually as soldiers. Only our little fort remained, and the enemy proposed to starve us out. The twenty janissaries had

sworn never to surrender, and the extremities of hunger to which they were reduced constrained them to eat the two eunuchs. A few days later, they decided to eat the women.

"We had a very pious and compassionate iman, and he preached them a beautiful sermon which persuaded them not to kill us outright. 'Only cut one slice from each of these ladies,' he said, 'and you will have very good fare. If necessary, you can take another slice later; heaven will feel indebted to you for such a benevolent action, and you will be saved.' He was an eloquent man, he convinced them, and they took their slices. The iman applied the same ointment that he applied to little boys on their eighth day, but we were all at the point of death.

"The janissaries had scarcely finished the meal we furnished them when the Russians arrived on flat boats. Not a janissary escaped. The Russians paid no attention to the state we were in, but there are French surgeons everywhere, and one of them, who was a very clever man, took care of us and cured us. I shall always remember that when my wound was healed he made certain proposals to me. Moreover, he told us all to take the matter calmly, that the same thing happened in numbers of seiges, and that it was one of the laws of war.

"As soon as my companions could walk, they were sent to Moscow; I fell to a boyard who made me his gardener and gave me twenty lashes a day. But when I had been with him two years, this gentleman and thirty others were broken on the wheel for some mischief-making at court, and I took advantage of his accident to escape. I

crossed the whole of Russia; I was servant in a public-house at Riga, then at Rostock, at Wismar, at Leipzig, at Cassel, at Utrecht, at Leyden, at the Hague, at Rotterdam. I have grown old in poverty and shame, always lacking the slice the janissaries dined on, always remembering that I was the daughter of a pope. I meant to kill myself a hundred times, but I always found that I wanted to go on living. That ridiculous weakness is probably one of our unluckiest propensities: is there anything more foolish than eternally carrying a load that we are always wishing to throw down? than having a horror of existence, and yet clinging to it? than caressing the serpent that is devouring you, until it has eaten out your heart? In the countries fate has forced me to survey, I have seen a prodigious number of people who cursed life, but I have not seen more than twelve who voluntarily ended their misery—three negroes, four Englishmen, four Swiss, and a German professor called Robeck."

V

THE philosophical world always remembers its obligation to Leibniz for his labours on the theory of monads, but the literary world does not always remember that it owes him Candide in the same way that it owes the Apologia pro vita sua to Charles Kingsley—since Leibniz repaid his royal patrons by discovering that this is the best of all possible worlds and annoyed Voltaire into accumulating thirty chapters of human miseries and human absurdities in Candide, and the Reverend Mr. Kingsley stung John Henry Newman into defending his submission to Rome in a book whose beautiful prose shows that belief in God will not destroy a style if the believer's mind is sufficiently hair-splitting.

Candide is as much a *roman à thèse*—a thing as different from a novel with a purpose as Candide and Don Quixote are different from Nicholas Nickleby and Uncle Tom's Cabin—as Rousseau's Julie. But Rousseau was as zealous and as solemn in his own passionately self-revealing way as his fellow Genevan, John Calvin; and when he turned back to the sentimentalities of d'Urfé and Madame de La Fayette and introduced the spirit and the new literary form of Samuel Richardson in the letters of his New Héloise, he only showed the natural affinity of Switzerland and evangelical England and did the *esprit gaulois* no permanent injury. In spite of Rousseau's virtuous and happy natural man and Chateaubriand's noble savages, the great

line of French literature is the line of the incredulous Voltaire and of the other magnificent pamphleteers of the eighteenth century, and its tradition has hardly been more touched by outside influence than the Athenian literature that flowered from an earlier crossing of the Nordic race with the Mediterranean. But Voltaire got himself exiled to London and learned to admire Swift and to endure Shakespeare, and then got himself exiled to Potsdam and read German philosophy. When Napoleon found Madame de Staël's Swiss temperament too cosmopolitan for an imperial court, her exile taught his subjects that beauty is not an absolute, that England and Germany knew other ways of creating beauty than the way of Racine and Molière, and that a tragic hero does not lose all his dignity when he gives up speaking in alexandrines. And when Napoleon took his own bees to Germany they carried back a fertile pollen to minds prepared for it by the terrors of the Revolution, and Gothic tales were written in French.

The quality of the distinctively German tale which is called Gothic is only the quality of the mediæval Germanic mind—the quality which might always have been a French quality if French literature and French architecture and all the French arts had not chosen their Latin inheritance. It is the same northern quality which produced Gothic cathedrals and gargoyles and leering devils —which made Walpurgis nights where the south made bacchanals, which saw trolls and nibelungs where the south saw nymphs and dryads and the great god Pan, which found its apotheosis in Faust and Peer Gynt where the south found its apotheosis in the Antigone and the Hippolytus. It is the same spirit which wrote

Tam O'Shanter and Macbeth, which conceived the gods of Walhalla in the fogs and mountains that were their natural habitat while Phoebus Apollo and grey-eyed Athena were conceived in the brilliant air and the marble hills of Greece—the same spirit which still makes Thomas Hardy suspect the malignity of nature where an Italian suspects the evil eye of his neighbour. The Paris that was destroyed between a passion for revolutions and a passion for boulevards was a good deal more like Nuremberg than the Paris of the third republic is like Athens or Rome, and the spirit of the very famous demon of Notre Dame is the spirit of Hoffmann's tales, of the strange German play and the strange German setting that were made from his tale of Kappelmeister Kreisler, and of the strange Cabinet of Dr. Caligari which has become the new French symbol of the qualities the new France dislikes in the new Germany.

This apparently eternal German mediævalism, this curious lack of humour which is at the same time a lack of criticism, has made Gothic—in everything except architecture—the reproachful adjective the Italians meant it to be. It has caused the lapse of taste which allowed Wagner to enjoy such a ridiculous figure as his regal Fricka always presents in her ram-drawn chariot, and it has denied the gift of high comedy to all unmitigatedly Teutonic races. It has given them instead the gift of poetry and of music, and Germany has paid for her Goethe and her Heine and her Beethoven with her definite lack of Voltaires and Sternes.

Nietzsche might have been Germany's Voltaire if he had not been an extremely religious poet whom an intellect and an age made a philosopher. And Nietzsche did

write a prose which lightened the weight of the German nouns and the involutions of the German syntax and the German grammar with a remarkable number of dashes, and which almost triumphed over the only mediæval language in which a great European nation still struggles to speak. The Germans have preserved a language which justifies the expressionists' theory that words are a great obstacle to a writer with a modern mind, and that they will write poems for which they will create their own words and sounds and syllables. But the language that was so well suited to songs about hedge roses and to fairy tales about restless pancakes was a proper enough speech for Hoffmann and Tieck and Fouqué and Chamisso and for all the young contemporaries of Goethe and Napoleon who were taking the Gothic spirit and the Gothic legends out of the middle-ages and the rat-haunted ruins of its castles and making them more Gothic and more mediæval by putting them in the houses and the minds of the dawning nineteenth century—in their own houses and their own minds.

Their tales have not only the Gothic quality of spiritual horror—they have the equally Gothic quality of desultory construction, and they are at least as uninteresting as the Elizabethan romances. But Hoffmann tales are still read by people who have never read one of his heavy lines, and who would never have heard his name if his tales had not inspired Offenbach to write an opera called The Tales of Hoffmann, and a love song called The Barcarolle from The Tales of Hoffmann. Hoffmann's name is scattered through the pages of Gautier's History of Romanticism, and Hoffmann tales are scattered through the volumes of Gautier and Hugo and of

Gérard de Nerval and Charles Nodier and George Sand —through the volumes of all the young bloods of the eighteen thirties, and through the verses of Heine. And after one of fiction's longest tacks, France received his influence again through the Gothic stories Hoffmann inspired Edgar Allan Poe to write, and England, which had known him through Frankenstein and The Mysteries of Udolpho and the weird tales of the annuals and through the laughter of Jane Austen, received his influence a hundred years later through the cool fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen.

Stories like Hoffmann's Sandman—which became the episode of the alluring mechanical doll in Offenbach's opera—and The Devil's Disciple and The Doge and the Dogaressa were just sufficiently divided between hysterical hallucination and a provincial and pedantic sanity to influence a distracted and pedantic genius like Poe's—to encourage visions that were sometimes as dithyrambic as Hoffmann's and a prose that was always more flamboyant. And stories like Poe's Murders in the Rue Morgue and his Marie Rogêt were just sufficiently divided between horror and ingenious and well-ordered analysis to influence a Frenchman like Baudelaire, and—with their exclamatory style smoothed by Baudelaire and by the French language—to inspire the Gothic little horrors and grotesques the French papers still print every day. Monsieur Lecoq and Rouletabille and Sherlock Holmes and all the other adroit detectives of fiction are descendants of Poe's logical Monsieur Dupin, and the modern detective story is Poe's only enduring creation.

If Frenchmen like Villiers de l'Isle Adam, whose stories show Poe's influence, and critics like Camille Mau-

clair, who proclaims his essentially æsthetic significance, knew Poe in his own language as the English know him, they could hardly revere a writer who always said the purloined letter when only pedantry and pomposity prevented his saying the stolen letter, and who could write—"And the Marchesa! Her lip—her beautiful lip trembles; tears are gathering in her eyes—those eyes which, like Pliny's acanthus, are 'soft and almost liquid' "—a sentence whose ill-timed classical allusion was never equalled by a respectable writer until Thomas Hardy wrote " 'Justice' was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Æschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess." The French have not yet acquired our American habit of ripping stories apart for their pattern, and they are not given to writing their opinion of the technique that Poe joined with his extravagant emotion and his extravagant language. But the countrymen of the jongleurs and of Voltaire and Mérimée could never be expected to agree with the patriotic American conviction that Poe gave unity to the short story merely because he said—with his usual fondness for using two words where one word was exactly enough—that a short narrative should have a certain unique or single effect, and the celebrated Gold-bug alone is sufficient evidence that Poe's stories lack that inevitable sequence which should make reading a piece of prose like unwinding an evenly wrapped ball of twine.

Poe did no doubt influence Oscar Wilde and Stevenson, but that is only another way of saying that he influenced the French, and most Englishmen have resisted him because they are the only nation that has the advantage of seeing his defects in the glare of his own language and

without his fellow-countrymen's curious idea that the short story is a peculiarly American craft. If Hoffmann's other disciple, Hans Christian Andersen, had not written the prose that Brandes calls grotesque and irregular in a language so very foreign as Danish, he would not be the influence that he has become in a country which writes the prose of Oxford and Cambridge—not even the influence he has become in a country which has only the prose of Harvard and Yale.

Hoffmann's influence on Andersen would seem no more than their common northern inheritance if Andersen had not said in the story of his life that three authors had infused themselves in his blood—Walter Scott, Hoffmann and Heine. The tale of the absurdly diabolical sandman became the amiable story of Old Shut-Eye, who gently squirts milk into children's eyes so that they can dream his beautiful stories, and the coffin in Little Ida's Flowers is the only shadow Hoffmann casts in the story Andersen borrowed from him. The tales of Hoffmann and of Poe are chastely voluptuous, but even Oscar Wilde became virginal when he imitated Andersen, and the story of Andersen's life has the odd Scandinavian sexual calmness that found a placidly scientific expression in Ellen Key and that became The Nordic Night when it had passed through the looking-glass of Paul Morand's Parisian eyes. That calmness is one of the reasons why the story tellers who might have been poets in a more impassioned generation turn to Andersen's transparent allegories when they can no longer endure painting portraits of an age that has found so many industrious photographers. And that transparence is the reason why The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck can be seen through

The Shepherdess and the Chimney-Sweep, why the shepherdess who preferred her table to the wide world and the stars gave James Branch Cabell a name for his book and the practical domestic character all his women share with the shepherdess and with the mother stork; why Norman Douglas's They Went can be seen more clearly through The Marsh King's Daughter than through the legends of Ys, why Andersen has given Rose Macaulay more than the names of Kay and Gerda, and Katherine Mansfield more than the pear-tree in Bliss.

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP

BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

HAVE you ever seen an old-fashioned oaken-wood cabinet, quite black with age and covered with varnish and carving? Just such a piece of furniture, an heirloom that had been the property of its present mistress's great-grandmother, once stood in a parlour. It was carved from top to bottom and roses and tulips, and little stags' heads with long branching antlers peered out from the curious scrolls and foliage surrounding them. Moreover, in the middle panel of the cabinet there was the full-length figure of a man, who seemed to be perpetually grinning, perhaps at himself, for in truth he was a most ridiculous figure; he had crooked legs, small horns on his forehead, and a long beard. The children of the house called him the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant, because that was a long, hard name, and not many figures, whether carved in wood or in stone, could boast of such a title. There he stood, with his eyes always fixed upon the table under the looking-glass; on this table stood a pretty little porcelain shepherdess, who had her mantle gathered gracefully round her and fastened with a red rose. Her shoes and hat were gilt, her hand held a crook—oh, she was charming! Close by her stood a little chimney-sweep, likewise of porcelain. He was as clean and neat

as any of the other figures. Indeed, the manfacturer might just as well have made a prince of him as a chimney-sweep. He was as black as a coal everywhere else, but his face was as fresh and rosy as a girl's, which was certainly a mistake—it ought to have been black. He held his ladder in his hand, and stood close to the little shepherdess. They had been placed beside each other at first, and they had always remained on the same spot, and there they had plighted their troth to each other. They suited each other very well: they were both young people, both of the same kind of porcelain, and both fragile and delicate.

Not far off stood a figure three times as large as the others. It was an old Chinese mandarin who could nod his head; he too was of porcelain, and he declared that he was grandfather to the little shepherdess. He could not prove this, but he insisted that he had authority over her, and so, when the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant made proposals to the little shepherdess, he nodded his head in token of his consent.

"Now you will have a husband," the old mandarin said to her, "a husband who, I verily believe, is of mahogany wood. You will be the wife of a Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant, of a man who has a whole cabinet full of silver plate, besides a store of no one knows what in the secret drawers."

"I will not go into that dismal cabinet," declared the little shepherdess. "I have heard that eleven porcelain ladies are already imprisoned there."

"Then you shall be the twelfth, and you will be in good company," rejoined the mandarin. "This very night,

when the old cabinet creaks, your nuptials shall be celebrated, as surely as I am a Chinese mandarin!"

Whereupon he nodded his head and fell asleep.

But the little shepherdess wept, and turned to the beloved of her heart, the porcelain chimney-sweep.

"I believe I must ask you," said she, "to go out into the wide world with me, for we cannot stay here."

"I will do everything you wish," replied the little chimney-sweep; "let us go at once. I think I can support you by my profession."

"If we could only get off the table!" she sighed. "I shall never be happy till we are away out in the wide world."

And he comforted her, and showed her how to set her little foot on the carved edges and the gilded foliage twining round the leg of the table, till at last they reached the floor. But when they turned to look at the old cabinet, they saw everything in a grand commotion, all the carved stags putting their little heads farther out, raising their antlers and moving their throats, whilst the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant sprang up and shouted to the old Chinese mandarin, "Look, they are eloping! they are eloping!" They were very frightened and quickly jumped into an open drawer for protection.

In this drawer there were three or four incomplete packs of cards, and also a little puppet-theatre. A play was being performed, and all the queens of diamonds, hearts, clubs, and spades, sat in the front row fanning themselves with the flowers they held in their hands, while behind them stood the knaves, showing that they

each had two heads, one above and one below, as most cards have. The play was about two people who were crossed in love, and the shepherdess wept over it, for it was just like her own history.

"I cannot bear this!" she said. "Let us leave the drawer." But when they had reached the floor again, they looked up at the table, and saw that the old Chinese mandarin had awakened, and that he was rocking his whole body to and fro with rage.

"Oh, the old mandarin is coming!" the little shepherdess cried, and down she fell on her porcelain knees in the greatest distress.

"A sudden thought has struck me," said the chimney-sweep. "Suppose we creep into the large pot-pourri vase that stands in the corner. There we can rest upon roses and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he comes near us."

"That will not do at all," she said, "for I know that the old mandarin was once betrothed to the pot-pourri vase, and no doubt there is still some slight friendship existing between them. No, there is no help for it. We must wander forth together into the wide world."

"Have you indeed the courage to go with me into the wide world?" the chimney-sweep asked. "Have you considered how large it is, and that we may never return home again?"

"I have," she replied.

And the chimney-sweep looked keenly at her, and then said, "My path leads through the chimney. Have you indeed the courage to creep with me through the stove, through the flues and the tunnel? Well do I know the

way! We shall mount up so high that they cannot come near us, and at the top there is a cavern that leads into the wide world."

And he led her to the door of the stove.

"Oh, how black it looks!" she sighed. She went on with him, through the flues and through the tunnel, where it was dark, pitch dark.

"Now we are in the chimney," he said, "and look, what a lovely star shines above us!"

And there was actually a star in the sky, shining right down upon them, as if to show them the way. And they crawled and crept—a fearful path was theirs—so high, so very high! But he guided and supported her, and showed her the best places to plant her tiny porcelain feet, till they reached the edge of the chimney. There they sat down to rest, for they were very tired.

Heaven with all its stars was above them, the town with all its roofs lay beneath them, and the wide, wide world surrounded them. The poor shepherdess had never imagined all this. She laid her little head on the chimney-sweep's arm, and wept so bitterly that the gilding broke off from her waistband.

"This is too much!" she exclaimed. "The world is too large! Oh, that I were once more upon the little table under the looking-glass! I shall never be happy till I am there again. I have followed you out into the wide world; surely you can follow me home again, if you love me!"

The chimney-sweep talked very sensibly to her and reminded her of the old Chinese mandarin and the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Coporal-

Sergeant. But she wept so bitterly and kissed her little chimney-sweep so fondly, that at last he could not but yield to her request, unreasonable as it was.

So with great difficulty they crawled down the chimney, crept through the flues and the tunnel, and at length they found themselves once more in the dark stove. But they still lurked behind the door, listening, before they would venture into the room. Everything was quite still. They peeped out. Alas! on the ground lay the old Chinese mandarin. When he tried to follow the runaways, he had fallen off the table and he had broken himself into three pieces. His head lay shaking in a corner. The crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant stood where he had always stood, thinking over what had happened.

"Oh, how shocking!" the little shepherdess exclaimed. "Old grandfather is broken in pieces, and we are the cause! I shall never survive it!" and she wrung her delicate hands.

"He can be put together again," replied the chimney-sweep. "He can very easily be put together; only do not be so impatient! If they glue his back together, and put a strong rivet in his neck, then he will be as good as new again, and he will be able to say plenty of unpleasant things to us."

"Do you really think so?" she asked. And then they climbed up the table to the place where they had stood before.

"See how far we have been!" the chimney-sweep said. "We might have spared ourselves all the trouble."

"If we could only have old grandfather put together!" the shepherdess said. "Will it cost very much?"

He was put together. The family had his back glued and his neck riveted. He was as good as new, but he could no longer nod his head.

"You have certainly grown very proud since you broke in pieces!" remarked the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant, "but I must say, for my part, I do not see that there is anything to be proud of. Am I to have her or am I not? Just answer me that!"

And the chimney-sweep and the little shepherdess looked imploringly at the old mandarin; they were so afraid lest he should nod his head. But he could not nod and he would not tell a stranger that he had a rivet in his neck. So the young porcelain people always remained together, and they blessed the grandfather's rivet, and loved each other till they were broken into pieces.

VI

THE Fox and the Grapes and The Lion and the Mouse have one unmistakable moral, and so has Candide, but the moral of The Shepherdess and the Sweep is so delicately balanced that a resolute reader can tilt it towards the stars or towards the safety of the table under the looking-glass, and the generation that knew The Ugly Duckling and The Little Mermaid before it knew how to read finds Andersen's ironic and accommodating allegory a perfect method for expressing its lack of convictions and for leaving to its readers the burden of discovering its philosophies.

That generation is Anglo-Saxon, and the day of the Anglo-Saxon story had not dawned. But the day of the individualistic Teuton had dawned, and the Frenchmen of Andersen's generation were the disciples of Hoffmann and of Byron and of the Goethe who wrote Werther and Wilhelm Meister. And they were the sons and grandsons of the men who had made the Europe that made Hoffmann and Byron—of the men who had made the revolution or who had only suffered it, and of the men who had made the armies of Napoleon or who had only suffered them. The men of the eighteen thirties created characters who had three dimensions and set them down in the streets and the houses and the cafés of Paris—in cafés with names and in houses with numbers. The most romantic generation in literary history made the realistic story and the realistic novel, and the charming bas-

reliefs of virtues and vices that Boccaccio had baptized with Christian names and the philosophical concepts that Voltaire had baptized with Christian—and Mohammedan—names gave way to human beings walking about in practicable scenery and breathing a practicable atmosphere.

Chaucer had cut his pilgrims in a fairly deep relief and Laurence Sterne had managed to make Tristram Shandy's father and his Uncle Toby breathe with only one characteristic apiece and Jane Austen had created Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse. But no nation had created a human being in a dozen or two pages until Alfred de Musset created one grisette who was Mimi Pinson and another who was Bernerette and Mérimée created one savage girl who was Carmen and another who was Colomba and one lover who was Saint Clair and another who was the gambling lieutenant in The Game of Backgammon. Except for his amorous journey to Venice, of which even Henry James deigned to gossip, Musset did not often cross anything except the Seine. Mérimée had an ungallic interest in the lands and the ways of the barbarians outside Paris which led him farther than the Cordova where he found Carmen and the Corsica where he found Colomba and Mateo Falcone; but he wrote to his incognita that Paris is the only city in which one can really live, and Mérimée and Musset made the story that is Parisian rather than French—Mérimée created the great lady who is also a femme d'esprit, and Musset was the Columbus of the Latin quarter and of the Bohemia to which Murger was only the Amerigo Vespucci.

Musset was always more concerned for the form of

his verses than for the form of his stories, and Reversals and Recognitions and unique and single effects were so unimportant to a Byronic poet whose heroes and heroines usually ended by poisoning themselves that his stories were always novels with a few short chapters, and he left to Mérimée the honour of giving the story its unique and single effect when he wrote Mateo Falcone and The Taking of the Redoubt. But the stories that were only anecdotes were shapely skeletons, and the form Mérimée gave to the story of the old Corsican who shot his own son when he betrayed the laws of hospitality is not so important as the body and the tone he gave to all of his stories. Musset was too disillusioned a Voltairean to be oratorical even in his verses, and his prose was always half a tone lower than life even when he was writing arabesques and fantasias, but the strain of English blood that made Mérimée a traveller and a philologist and the translator of Pushkin and Gogol and Turgenev also made him the first Frenchman whose writing shows his conviction that a gentleman's stories can be as well-bred and as apparently unpremeditated as his conversation, and the first writer of stories who had a severely civilized point of view and whom it would be impossible to imagine writing anything so youthful as poetry. And something gave him a dignity of mind that French literature had never known before and that made even his love-letters dignified and tender and clever.

Saint Clair's point of view about love and about life was Mérimée's point of view about love and life and literature, and it is his point of view that makes Mérimée's stories the literary bridge between the passionate disbelief of the eighteenth century and the unconcerned

disbelief of the twentieth century. His point of view gives The Etruscan Vase the unique and single effect and the unique and single moral that its apparently casual construction would seem to deny it—the ending would horrify any American authority on Mérimée's art who happened to read it, and Mateo Falcone and The Taking of the Redoubt, which carries tightness of form and fear of emotion to such a high point that its last sentence is unfortunately like a prophecy of Browning and the day we French stormed Ratisbon, are certainly more obviously the mutants in the short story's evolution that Maupassant's stories are fabulously supposed to be. But Mérimée wrote those two stories whose intention makes the swiftness of a pistol shot their proper form a few months before he wrote the story of the captured African chief called Tamagno, and a year before he wrote The Etruscan Vase and The Game of Backgammon—Mérimée gave Mateo Falcone the form that its emotion demanded, and he gave The Etruscan Vase the form that its emotion demanded.

And Maupassant gave The Necklace the form that its emotion demanded and The Log the form that its emotion demanded, though his disciples and his expositors have tried to deny him the distinction. The heroine of the celebrated Necklace is any one of those pretty and charming girls whom fate unfortunately allows to be born into a family of clerks, her husband is any one of those round faced clerks who shave themselves once a week and enjoy cabbage soup every evening, and the friend of her convent days is any woman who has a necklace and is amiable enough to lend it. Maupassant's style is as exact and as deliberately devoid of charm as Mérimée's

and Stendhal's and Flaubert's—it is not a style like Anatole France's, which reads a story for you after you have read the first sentence for yourself, and the story has nothing much to recommend it except the periodic structure that also recommends a minstrel's joke. But Maupassant wrote something like two hundred stories, and dozens of them are rereadable and dozens of them offer a greater reward for half an hour's reading than a second's surprise at the author's cleverness.

There is, for example, the story called Happiness, which has the slow movement and the calm aftermath that belong to the memory of a lifetime of happiness. There is Madame Tellier's House, whose irony is the unastonished narration of a journey the ladies of a house of ill fame made to a christening, and of the pleasure the prominent citizens of their city experienced on the evening of their return. There is Moonlight, which moves logically and not astonishingly towards a priest's discovery of the nature of love and women and moonlight—and the priest is the Abbé Marignan, not merely priest-in-himself. There is Butter Ball, the admirable story of a cocotte who sacrificed what was left of her virtue to the demands of the fellow-travellers who were detained with her by a very Prussian lieutenant, who found herself the next day in the same diligence in a depressingly Reversed Situation, and whose Recognition was the Recognition of what human nature is and what virtue is—in France, and in some other countries. And there is The Jewels, which follows its Reversal and its Recognition with another Recognition of what human nature is—in France, and in some other countries.

MIMI PINSON

BY ALFRED DE MUSSET

I

AMONG the students at the Medical College last year, there was a young man called Eugène Aubert, who came of a good family and who was barely nineteen years old. His parents lived in the provinces and gave him a small allowance which he found quite sufficient. He lived quietly, and people thought him mild and gentle. His fellow students were fond of him because he was always amiable and obliging, and always generous and sympathetic. The only fault for which they reproached him was a singular taste for revery and solitude and a reserve so extreme that they nicknamed him Little Girl—a name at which he laughed himself, and which his friends meant as a joke because they knew that he was as brave as any of them. But his conduct did justify the nickname a little, particularly because it was so different from the conduct of his companions. When there was a question of studying, he was the first one at work, but when the question was a matter of pleasure, of a dinner at the Mouline de Beurre or of a danse at the Chaumière, the Little Girl shook his head and went back to his shabby little room. The most shocking thing to the other students was that he had no mistress, although his youth and his good looks would have won numbers of girls for him—that no one had even seen him sparking with a grisette across her counter, as every one has always done

in the Latin quarter. The beauties who inhabit the Mount of Saint Geneviève and divide the affections of the students among themselves inspired in him only a distaste that went so far as to become positive aversion. He considered them a species apart, a dangerous, useless, depraved species, created to exchange misery and misfortune for their pleasures.

"Look out for those women," he was always saying. "They are dolls made of red-hot iron." And, unfortunately, he found only too many examples to justify his horror of them. The quarrels, the dissipation, the actual ruin that follow these casual connections, which look like happiness from the outside, were as easy to cite last year as they are this year and as they will doubtless be next year.

It goes without saying that Eugène's friends were eternally teasing him about his virtue and his scruples. "What of it?" asked a certain Marcel who made a profession of enjoying himself. "What does one blunder prove, or one accidental casualty?"

"That one must avoid the things which might cause another accidental casualty," Eugène answered.

"Fallacious argument," Marcel said, "the argument of a playing-card that falls if its comrade stumbles. What are you worrying about? One of us loses at cards, but is that any reason for becoming a monk? One hasn't a penny, another has nothing to drink except fresh water, but does Élise lose her appetite? If her neighbour pawns his watch and goes off to Montmorency and breaks his arm, she does not lose hers. You have a duel because of Rosalie, your opponent runs you through. She turns her back. That is quite simple

—has it injured her figure? Those are some of the little inconveniences scattered through life, and they are rarer than you think. Watch the happy lovers in the cafés and the streets and the country inns on a beautiful Sunday. Observe for me these large buses, crammed full of grisettes, and driving out to Ranelagh or to Belleville. Count what goes out of the Saint Jacques quarter on any holiday—battalions of milliners, armies of seamstresses, swarms of girls from tobacco shops. All of that enjoys itself, all of it has lovers, all of that alights under the arbours around Paris like so many flights of sparrows. If the weather is bad, all that goes to melodramas and eats oranges and weeps. They eat a great deal and they are always willing to weep, which proves their good characters. But when these poor girls have sewed, basted, hemmed, stitched and darned all the week, why shouldn't they spend Sunday setting the example of forgetting evil and loving their neighbours? And when a decent man has spent a week dissecting some only slightly agreeable objects, what can he do that is better than freshening up his eyes by looking at a pretty face, a round leg, and the beauties of nature?"

"Whited sepulchres!" Eugène said.

"I said and I still say," Marcel went on, "that one can praise grisettes and that one should do it in moderation. In the first place, they are virtuous, because they spend their days making the most indispensable apparel of modesty. In the second place, they are polite, because there is not a proprietor of a lingerie shop who does not recommend that her girls should speak courteously to her customers. In the third place, they are neat and clean because they will not be as well payed if

they soil the linen they always have in their hands. In the fourth place, they tell the truth, because they drink ratafia. In the fifth place, they are economical and frugal, because they do not earn thirty sous easily and if they are sometimes greedy and extravagant, it is never with their own money. In the sixth place, they are very gay, because their work is generally frightfully tedious and they frisk like fish in the water as soon as their work is over. Another advantage is that they are never a nuisance, because they spend their lives nailed to one chair and they can't run after their lovers like ladies of fashion. Moreover, they are not gossips, because they have to count their stitches. They spend very little for shoes, because they walk very little, and not much more for frocks because shops do not often give them credit. If they can be accused of inconstancy, bad novels and natural wickedness are not the causes—that comes from the large number of people who go into their shops. On the other hand, they prove that they are capable of veritable passions by the large number of them who throw themselves out of the window or into the Seine every day, and the large number who asphyxiate themselves in their domiciles. They have, I admit, the drawback of frequent hunger and thirst, precisely because of their great temperance, but every one knows that they can satisfy themselves with a glass of beer and a cigarette in place of food—a precious quality not often met in respectable households. In short, I maintain that they are good, lovable, faithful and disinterested, and that they should not be allowed to end in the almhouse."

Marcel usually said things like this when he was at a café and the wine had heated his head a little. He filled

Eugène's glass and urged him to drink to the health of Mademoiselle Pinson, worker in linen, who was their neighbour, but Eugène took up his hat and slipped out while Marcel continued to address his comrades.

II

Mademoiselle Pinson was not precisely what is called a pretty woman. There is a great deal of difference between a pretty woman and a pretty grisette. If a pretty woman who was so defined in the language of Paris decided to put on a little bonnet, a cotton frock and a silk apron, people would call her a pretty grisette. But if a grisette muffled herself up in a hat, a velvet cape and a Palmyre gown, she would not be in the least obliged to become a pretty woman—on the contrary, she would probably look like a coat-rack, and she would be perfectly within her rights. The difference consists in the situation of the two beings, and chiefly in the scrap of twisted cardboard, covered with velvet or silk and called a hat, which women have decided to attach to various sides of their heads—a little in the fashion of the blinkers of a horse. (But one must admit that blinkers prevent a horse from seeing on either side and that the scrap of cardboard prevents nothing.)

No matter why, a little bonnet authorizes a turned-up nose, which, in its turn, necessitates a well slit mouth, which must be filled with pretty teeth and framed in a round face. A round face asks for shining eyes, which should be as black as possible, and which should shine under beautiful lashes. The hair is *ad libitum,* pro-

vided the black eyes make up for everything else. Such an arrangement is far from conventional beauty—it is the classic face of the grisette, who might be ugly beneath the scrap of cardboard but whom the bonnet makes charming, and prettier than mere beauty. Such was Mademoiselle Pinson.

Marcel had decided that Eugène must become the lover of this young lady, for no better reason than that he himself was the adorer of Mademoiselle Zélia, the intimate friend of Mademoiselle Pinson. He found arranging things to his own taste natural and convenient and he considered the creation of love in a friendly fashion also natural and convenient. Such plans are not unusual, and they succeed often enough—since opportunity has always been the strongest of the temptations. Who can say what happiness and unhappiness, what loves and quarrels and joys and despairs have been created by two neighbouring doors, a secret stairway, a hall, or a broken pane of glass?

Some characters, nevertheless, refuse to become victims of chance. They insist on conquering their own joys, not winning them in a lottery, and they do not feel disposed to love because they happen to sit beside a pretty woman in a stage-coach. Eugène was one of them, and Marcel knew that he was, but he had formed a plan which was perfectly simple and which he thought would certainly overcome his friend's resistance.

Marcel had decided to give a supper, and he found his own birthday an excellent excuse for it. He had two dozen bottles of beer and a great piece of cold veal with a salad sent to his room, and he bought an enormous

cake and a bottle of champagne. He first asked two students, and then he informed Mademoiselle Zélia that there would be a festive occasion at his house in the evening, and that she must bring Mademoiselle Pinson. They were not inclined to miss it. Marcel had every right to his reputation of being one of the Latin quarter's lights whose invitations were never refused, and seven o'clock had just finished striking when the two grisettes knocked at his door. Mademoiselle Zélia wore a short frock, grey shoes and a bonnet adorned with flowers. Mademoiselle Pinson was more modestly dressed in a black frock which she was never seen without, and which people said gave her the slightly Spanish air of which she was so proud. Neither of them, one may suppose, suspected the designs of their host.

Marcel had not made the mistake of asking Eugène beforehand. He knew that Eugène would have refused, and he waited until the young ladies had emptied their first glass before he begged their permission to go for a guest. When he went into Eugène's room, he found his friend still studying and after some slight conversation, he gently began his usual reproaches about tiring himself too much and having no amusement, and then he asked Eugène to go for a walk. Eugène really was tired from studying all day, and the two young men went out together. After a few turns in the Luxembourg garden Marcel had no trouble in persuading Eugène to go home with him.

When the two grisettes were left alone, they began by making themselves comfortable, and after they had taken off their shawls and their bonnets they danced to-

gether to the music of their own singing—but not without doing the food the honour of trying it now and then. Their eyes and their cheeks were shining when they stopped to receive Eugène's timid and astonished bow. He went about so little that they hardly knew him and they scrutinized him from his feet to his head in the fashion of their caste before they went on singing and dancing as if nothing had happened. He stepped back, rather disconcerted and probably thinking of escaping, but Marcel had locked the door and he threw the key on the table.

"Not another soul!" he cried. "What are our friends doing? But that doesn't matter since we have captured the savage. Young ladies, I present to you the most virtuous young man in France or Navarre, who has long desired the honour of your acquaintance, and who particularly admires Mademoiselle Pinson."

The song stopped again. Mademoiselle Pinson made a little bow and put her bonnet on again.

"Eugène," Marcel exclaimed, "this is my birthday and these ladies have kindly come to celebrate it with me. I brought you almost by force, I admit, but I hope that you will stay with a good grace, at our common entreaty. It is not quite eight o'clock and we have time to smoke a pipe while we wait for our appetites."

He looked significantly at Mademoiselle Pinson as he spoke, and she bowed again and smiled. "Yes, we beg you," she said in a sweet voice.

Just at that moment the other two students knocked at the door. Eugène saw that he could not leave without being rude and he gave up and sat down with the others.

III

The supper was long and noisy. The students first filled the room with smoke and then drank as much as they had smoked to refresh themselves. The ladies undertook the conversation and enlivened the company with more or less pointed stories at the expense of their friends and acquaintances and with more or less credible adventures they had heard in their work-rooms. If their subjects lacked the appearance of truth, at least they were not dull. Two lawyer's clerks, if one may believe it, had won twenty thousand francs by gambling on the Spanish funds, and they had devoured their winnings in six weeks with two girls from a glove counter. The son of one of the richest bankers in Paris had suggested an opera-box and a country-house to a celebrated seamstress who had refused them because she preferred to look after her parents and to remain faithful to an admirer at the Deux Magots. A certain personage whom one could not mention and whose rank obliged him to envelop himself in the greatest secrecy, came incognito to call on an embroiderer in the alley that leads to the Pont Neuf, who had been kidnapped by order of some still more exalted being, put in a post-chaise at midnight with a portfolio full of bank-notes, and sent to the United States, and so on.

"That's enough," Marcel said, "we know about all that. Zélia improvises, and as for Mademoiselle Mimi (so Mademoiselle Pinson was called among her intimates) her information is inexact. Your lawyer's clerks won nothing except a sprain from jumping a stream. Your banker offered nothing more than an orange, and

your embroiderer is so little in the United States that she can be seen every day between twelve and four at the almshouse, where she has taken lodgings owing to a lack of eatables."

Eugène was sitting beside Mademoiselle Pinson, and he thought that she turned pale when Marcel pronounced his last word with a complete indifference. But almost immediately she stood up, lit a cigarette, and stopped Marcel with great firmness.

"Silence yourself! I demand the floor. Since the honourable Marcel does not believe fables, I am going to tell a true story, *et quorum pars magna fui.*"

"You speak Latin?" Eugène asked.

"As you see," Mademoiselle Pinson answered. "I inherited that sentence from my uncle who served under the great Napoleon and who never failed to say it before he recited the story of some battle. If you do not know what these words signify, you may learn without paying. They mean 'I give you my word of honour.' You must know, then, that I went to the Odéon last week with Blanchette and Rougette."

"Wait while I cut the cake," Marcel interrupted her.

"Cut, but listen," Mademoiselle Pinson continued. "I had gone, then, to see a tragedy at the Odéon with Blanchette and Rougette. Rougette, as you know, has just lost her grandmother and she inherited four hundred francs from her. We had taken a lower box and three students who were sitting in the parterre asked us to supper on the pretext that we were alone."

"Point-blank?" Marcel asked. "That was certainly polite. And you refused, I suppose?"

"No," Mademoiselle Pinson told him, "we accepted,

and we left during the intermission and went to Viot's."

"With your squires?"

"With our squires. The waiter began by telling us that there was nothing left. But such a slight difficulty was not going to stop us. We ordered them to hunt the town over for whatever was lacking. Rougette took the pen and ordered a supper fit for a wedding —shrimps, a sweet omelette, fritters, aspics, frozen eggs, everything in the world of pots. Our young strangers, to tell the truth, began to look a little glum."

"I can easily believe it!" Marcel said.

"We paid no attention to it. When they brought the things we began to play the fine lady. Nothing was right, everything made us ill. As soon as they began serving a dish we sent it away and demanded some other. 'Waiter, take that away—it is uneatable—where did you find such horrors?' Our three students wanted to eat everything, but they were not allowed to taste a dish. In short, we supped as Sancho dined, and our rage even led us to break a few dishes."

"Nice behaviour! And how did you pay the bill?"

"That is precisely the question the three strangers asked each other. From the conversation they held in a low tone, one of them seemed to possess six francs, the second much less, and the third had only his watch, which he generously took out of his pocket. In this state, the three wretches presented themselves to pay the bill, hoping to get some kind of a delay. What do you think they were told?"

"I think," Marcel answered, "that they kept you as pledges, and that they led you to jail."

"That is not the correct answer," Mademoiselle Pinson answered. "Before we went up, Rougette had arranged everything, and everything was paid in advance. Imagine the theatrical moment when Viot said, 'Gentlemen, everything is already paid.' Three dogs never looked at three bishops as our strangers looked at us—with a pitiful stupefaction mingled with a pure tenderness. We had the air of not seeing their expression and we had a carriage called. 'Dear marquise,' Rougette said to me, 'we must take these gentlemen home.' 'With pleasure, dear countess,' I answered. Our poor gallants did not know what to say, and you can imagine how sheepish they looked. They resisted our courtesy, and they refused to say where they lived. . . . Naturally! They thought we were ladies of fashion and they lived in the Rue du Chat qui Pêche . . ."

The two students, who had hardly done more than smoke and drink without speaking, seemed very slightly pleased with the story. Their faces darkened, and perhaps they knew as much as Mademoiselle Pinson did about that unlucky supper because they looked at her uneasily when Marcel laughed and asked who the three gallants were.

"Take off their masks, Mademoiselle Mimi. Since it happened last week that can't bother them."

"Never, gentlemen," the grisette said. "One can make a man ridiculous, but one must never injure his career."

"You are right," Eugène said, "and perhaps you are wiser than you realize. There is probably hardly one of the students in these schools who has not some folly behind him, and nevertheless all that is most respected in

France come out of them—doctors, magistrates . . ."

. . . "Yes," Marcel said, "that is true. There are future peers of France who dine at Flicoteaux's and who can't always pay their bills. But," he added, with a wink of his eye, "haven't you seen your unknown admirers again?"

"What do you take us for?" Mademoiselle Pinson asked seriously and almost angrily. "Don't you know Blanchette and Rougette? and do you suppose that I myself . . ."

"It's all right," Marcel said, "don't get in a rage. But that's a fine lot. Three foolish girls who hadn't enough money to pay for their dinner the next day, and who threw everything they had out of the window to mystify three poor devils!"

"Why did they ask us to supper?" Mademoiselle Pinson retorted.

IV

The unique bottle of champagne appeared with the cake and composed the whole dessert. When they began drinking the wine, they began talking of songs. "I see," said Marcel, "I see, as Cervantes said, that Zélia is coughing. It is her sign that she is ready to sing. But it is my birthday, and if these gentlemen agree with me, I will beg Mademoiselle Mimi to honour us with a couplet unless she is hoarse from her story. Eugène, be gallant for once. Drink with your neighbour and ask her to sing a couplet for me."

Eugène blushed and obeyed. Since Mademoiselle Pinson had not disdained to beg him to stay on, he

bowed and said to her timidly, "We beg you, mademoiselle."

As he said that, he raised his glass and touched his neighbour's. From this slight blow, a delicate, silvery tone floated out. Mademoiselle Pinson seized the note on the wing and sang a long trill on it in a fresh, clear voice.

"Very well," she said, "I consent, since my glass gave me the la. But what would you like me to sing? I'm not old maidish, but I don't know any troopers' songs. I do not vulgarize my memory."

"We understand," Marcel said. "You are virtue itself. Follow your own inclinations, since opinions at least have their liberty."

"Very well," Mademoiselle Pinson answered, "I will sing some verses that were written about me."

"Listen to her! Who is the author?"

"The other girls in the shop. It is poetry composed to the needle. I beg your indulgence for it."

"Has your song a chorus?"

"Of course! That's a fine question."

"In that case," Marcel commanded, "we will take our knives, and strike the table with them during the chorus. But we must try to beat in time with each other. Zélia can refrain if she likes."

"And why, wretched boy?" Zélia asked angrily.

"For a good reason," he answered. "But if you want to be in the game, beat with a cork—that will be more agreeable for our ears and for your white hands."

Marcel had seated himself in the middle of the table with his knife in his hand and the glasses and plates arranged around him. The two students who had been

Rougette's guests at supper had cheered up enough to take the bowls off their pipes so that they could beat time with the stems. Eugène was dreaming, and Zélia was sulking. Mademoiselle Pinson picked up a plate and asked by a sign if she might break it. Marcel answered with a gesture of consent, and the singer took the two pieces for castanets and began the verses that her companions had written, after excusing herself in advance for whatever might be too flattering to her.

Mimi Pinson, she is fair;
Blonde and beautiful is she;
Just one dress, so debonair,
  One bonnet, see!
Poorer wardrobe were a shame,
So God wills it, in such fashion
To give Mimi a good name,
For she can not pledge the same,
This dress of Mimi Pinson
  Landerirette!

Mimi Pinson wears a rose
Whiter than her pretty face;
In her heart its leaves disclose
What life and grace!
When her supper gives her cheer,
Then she sings la chanson
Quaffing wine or only beer,
While there hangs above her ear
  Her bonnet, Mimi Pinson
  Landerirette!

Sharpest eyes I do attest
And with hands concealed by day

In the wide sleeves of her vest
She stands at bay—
Not maltreating anyone,
But giving him a lesson
Better taught than at Sorbonne—
Do not rumple that chiffon,
That dress of Mimi Pinson.
Landerirette!

A virgin—yes, she may remain so,
If God wills it, to the end,
With her implement to sew
At finger-end;
No fear of earning daily bread.
He must be a fine garçon
Who wins her, and be honest bred—
Not very distant from her head
Her bonnet, Mimi Pinson.
Landerirette!

With a wreath of orange flower
If to crown her love sees fit,
She has something, a rare dower,
To give for it—
But do not in haste divine
Blazoning of escutcheon—
It hides something still more fine,
Something neither yours nor mine,
The dress of Mimi Pinson.
Landerirette!

Mimi has no common soul—
Hers a democratic heart;
In the ranks she did enroll,
In war took part.

She had made, in place of blade,
A spear out of a bodkin.
A lovely sentinel she made.
Lucky, who places his cockade
On the toque of Mimi Pinson.
Landerirette! *

The knives and the pipes and even the chairs had made the proper disturbance at the end of each verse. The glasses danced on the table and the half-empty bottles rolled around joyfully and gave each other little nudges.

"And your dear friends wrote that song?" Marcel said. "It's been too well dyed—there's nothing left of the original colour. I prefer the good old songs that say something."

And he intoned in his strong voice,

"Nanette was not yet quite fifteen . . ."

"Enough, enough," Mademoiselle Pinson said. "Can't one of you play for us to dance?"

"I have just what you need," Marcel told her, "I have a guitar. But," as he took it down from the wall, "the guitar hasn't what it needs. It is bald from the loss of three strings."

"But you have a piano," Zélia said, "you can play for us."

Marcel looked at his mistress as furiously as if she had accused him of some crime. He did know a few dances, but playing them was a torture that he never

* The song is from Raoul Pellissier's English version of the tale, published by Edwin C. Hill Co., 1905.

willingly suffered. Zélia was revenging herself for the cork.

"Are you mad?" Marcel asked her. "You know perfectly well that this piano is only here to add its magnificence to the room, and that you are the only person who can get a sound out of it. Where did you get the idea that I can play dances when I can only play the Marseillaise with one finger? If you should ask Eugène, you would find that he is the musician, but I won't ask him because I don't want to bore him with playing. No one except you would do anything so indiscreet without warning."

For the third time, Eugène blushed and did what Marcel asked him to do in his polite, indirect fashion. He sat down at the piano, and a quadrille began.

The dancing lasted nearly as long as the supper. After the quadrille came a waltz, and after the waltz a galop, since they still galop in the Latin quarter. The ladies were particularly indefatigable, and they waked the neighbourhood with their gambols and their shouts of laughter. Eugène was worn out by his evening's work and by the noise, and he began to play mechanically, half-asleep like a postilion on his horse. The dancers passed and repassed him like phantoms in a dream, and since no one becomes melancholy as easily as a man who is watching other people laugh, and since he was naturally melancholy, he began to think gloomy thoughts. "Poor happiness, wretched pleasures! they fly away to misery the moment one begins to think. And as Marcel said, who knows that these five people who are leaping about so gaily are sure of having dinner tomorrow?"

As he made this reflection, Mademoiselle Pinson

danced by him, and he thought that she slipped a piece of the cake into her pocket as she passed the table.

V

Day was breaking when Marcel's supper was over, and Eugène walked about the streets for some time before he went back to his room. Still continuing his gloomy thoughts, he sang a verse of the grisette's song in a whisper.

Just one dress, so debonair,
One bonnet, see!

"Can that be true?" he asked himself. "Can poverty show itself so frankly and laugh at itself? Can one laugh at one's own hunger?"

The piece of cake left no doubt of it. Eugène smiled at the same time that he could have wept from pity. "But she took the cake," he thought, "not the bread. Perhaps she is a little pig, or perhaps she took it for some neighbour's child, or for a gossiping Cerberus of a concierge who might tell people that Mademoiselle Pinson had stayed out all night unless she was appeased."

Eugène had been walking along without seeing where he was going, and he had happened into that labyrinth of little streets behind the Carrefour Bucy, where a carriage can hardly pass. Just as he was turning back a woman in an old dressing-gown and with her hair in disorder around her pale face came out of one of the houses. She seemed to be so weak that she could

scarcely walk. Her knees bent and she leaned against the walls as she went towards a letter-box to drop in a note that she had in her hand. Eugène was astonished and frightened, but he went up to her and asked her what she was looking for and if he could help her. He held her up when she almost fell, but she drew herself away from him with a sort of fear and pride. She laid down her note, pointed to the letter-box, and gathered up strength enough to say just one word. "There," she said, and turned back to the house she had come from, still supporting herself against the walls. Eugène could not persuade her to take his arm or to answer his questions, and she went slowly back down the dark narrow alley.

Eugène had picked up her letter and he had taken a step or two towards the box when he stopped. This strange meeting had troubled him so much and he felt so much horror and so much sympathy that he opened the letter before he had time to realize what he was doing. It seemed to him that he must use any means of penetrating such a mystery. Evidently this woman was dying either of some illness or of hunger, and from poverty in either case. Eugène unfolded the letter which was addressed "To the Baron de G——."

"Read this letter, and do not refuse my prayers. You can save me, and you only. Believe what I tell you and save me and you will have done a kind deed that will bring you happiness. I have just been very ill, and I have lost all my strength and my courage. I go back to the shop in August, my clothes are being held in my old lodgings and I am almost certain that I shall be turned into the street before Saturday. I am so afraid of starving that this morning I decided to throw myself in the river, since

I had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. But when I thought of you, a little hope came back into my heart. I did not deceive myself, did I? I beg you on my knees to help me live at least a few days more. I am afraid to die, and I am only twenty-three years old. With a little help, I may manage to hold out until the first of the month. If I knew the words that would excite your pity I would say them, but nothing comes into my mind. I can only weep over my own weakness, because I am afraid that you will treat my letter as people who are always receiving them do treat such letters. You will tear it up without realizing that a poor woman is waiting and hoping that you will not be able to leave her in suspense. I know that a louis is very little to you and I think you will fold it in a sheet of paper and address it to Mademoiselle Bertin, Rue de l'Éperon. I changed my name when I began to work in the shops, because my name is my mother's name. As you go out of your house, you can give the paper to your porter. I will wait Wednesday and Thursday, and I shall pray fervently that God will make you kind.

Perhaps you will not believe that such poverty is possible, but if you saw me you would be convinced.

Rougette"

Eugène was touched when he read the letter, but he was astonished when he read the signature. This Rougette must be the same girl who had spent her money giving parties and who had planned the ridiculous supper that Mademoiselle Pinson had told them about, and now she had come to this wretchedness and to such a letter. Such improvidence and such folly seemed an incredible dream to Eugène, but the signature was there and Mademoiselle Pinson had mentioned that her friend Rougette had become Mademoiselle Bertin. How had she suddenly found herself abandoned, helpless, without food, and almost homeless? What were her friends

doing while she was dying in some attic of this house? And what kind of a house was it where she could be left to die?

This was not the moment for conjectures. He must do something for her.

Eugène went into a little restaurant that had just opened, and bought what he found there. He walked back to Rougette's house with the waiter, but he was ashamed to go in himself. The poor girl's pride made him fear that she would be hurt, even if she did not end by refusing his help. He could not tell her that he had read her letter.

"Do you know a certain Mademoiselle Bertin who lives in this house?" he asked the waiter when they had reached the door.

"Very well, sir!" the waiter answered. "We very often bring her orders. But she is in the country just now."

"Who told you that she was?" Eugène asked.

"The concierge here, sir. Mademoiselle Rougette is very fond of good food, but she isn't fond of paying for it. She orders roast chickens and lobsters, but you have to come back more than once to see her money. And, besides, in the quarter we know when she is here and when she is not . . ."

"She is back," Eugène interrupted. "Go up to her room, leave what you have and if she owes you money do not ask for it today. That will be my business, and I will come back. If she asks who sent you, tell her Baron de G——."

With these words, Eugène took himself off. As he walked along, he sealed Rougette's letter again and

dropped it in a box. "After all," he thought, "Rougette will not refuse. And if she finds the answer to her note a little too prompt, she can ask the baron to explain that."

VI

Like grisettes, students are not rich every day. Eugène knew quite well that he should have sent the louis by the waiter if he expected Rougette to believe his little fable, but the louis is not precisely the common currency of the Rue Saint Jacques. Moreover, Eugène had promised to pay Rougette's bill at the restaurant and unfortunately his drawer did not happen to be any better furnished than his pocket that day. That is why he went straight to the Place du Panthéon.

The famous hair-dresser who managed to ruin himself and other people at the same time still had his shop in the Place last year. Large and small usury was carried on in the back of his shop and the students who were poor and improvident, and who were probably in love, came every day to borrow a few francs which they spent gaily in the evening and payed back with enormous interest afterwards. Grisettes slipped in, ashamed to be caught renting a faded hat for a day in the country, or a dyed shawl, or a chemise bought at a pawn-shop. Youths of good families who needed twenty-five louis signed notes for two or three thousand francs, minors ate up their inheritance, and giddy boys ruined their families and their own futures. From the titled courtesan whose head can be turned by a bracelet to the needy scholar who hankers after an old book or a plate of

beans, everything came there just as everything went to the fountain of Pactolus, and the usurious hair-dresser boasted of his clients and his exploits and entertained the Clichy prison while he was waiting to go there himself.

This was the forlorn hope to which Eugène found himself reduced if he must find the money to help Rougette. He could not be sure that the baron would help her, and although a student was doing something unusual when he undertook to help a girl he did not even know, Eugène believed in God, and every kind action seemed to him a work of necessity.

The first person he saw when he went into the shop was Marcel, seated in front of a dressing-table with a towel around his neck as if he were having his hair done. Perhaps the poor boy had come because he needed money to pay for his supper. He looked worried, and frowned while the hair-dresser passed a cold iron over his hair and whispered to him in his Gascon accent. Another young man, equally muffled up in his towel, was sitting before another dressing-table and looking distractedly from one side to the other, and through the door one could see the reflection of a passably thin girl whom the hair-dresser's wife was helping to try on a plaid frock.

"What are you doing here at this hour?" called out Marcel, whose face took on its usual good-humoured expression when he recognized his friend.

Eugène sat down near him and explained his encounter and what he had done and what he was proposing to do.

"You are certainly simple," Marcel said. "Why should you trouble yourself since she has a baron? You saw an interesting girl who showed the need of taking

nourishment. You bought her a cold chicken, which was worthy of you, and requires no apology. You did not ask gratitude, and you enjoyed playing the unknown, which is heroic. But to do anything more is positively chivalrous, and in the memory of man, no one has pawned his watch for a seamstress who is protected by a baron, except in the Blue Library."

"Laugh if you like," Eugène answered. "I know there are more troubles in the world than I can cure. I pity those that I do not know, but if I see one, I must do what I can. I cannot remain indifferent in the face of suffering. I am not rich enough to go about looking for the poor, but when I find them, I give them something."

"In that case, you have enough to do. Poor people are not rare in this country," Marcel said.

"What of that?" Eugène said, still distressed by what he had just seen. "Do you think I should walk by and leave people to die? This girl is a giddy fool, anything you like, and perhaps she does not deserve the compassion I feel for her, but I still feel it. Would you like to have me imitate the dear friends who helped her to get rid of her money and who do not seem any more concerned about her than if she were no longer in the world? To whom can she go? To some stranger who will light his cigar with her letter, or perhaps to this Mademoiselle Pinson who goes out to supper and dances merrily while her friend is starving? I admit to you, Marcel, that all this horrifies me. I can't bear to think of that flippant little thing who sang and joked at the very minute when the heroine of her story was dying in a garret. To live together like friends, almost like sisters, in and out of theatres and dance-halls and

cafés, and not to know the next day whether the other is dead or alive—that is worse than selfishness, worse than the insensibility of animals. Your Mademoiselle Pinson is a monster and I know no one worse than these shameless, soulless grisettes whom you praise!"

The hair-dresser, who had silently gone on running his cold iron over Marcel's head during this conversation, smiled slyly when Eugène had finished. He chattered like a magpie or like the hair-dresser that he was when his clients were talking scandal, but when they were discussing business, he was as taciturn and laconic as a Spartan until his interlocutor had revealed himself. The indignation that Eugène expressed so violently made him break his silence.

"You are severe, sir," he said, laughing and Gasconning. "I have the honour of dressing Mademoiselle Mimi's hair, and I think her an excellent young person."

"Yes," Eugène said, "excellent indeed in matters of drinking and smoking."

"Possibly," the hair-dresser answered. "I do not say you are wrong. These girls laugh and drink and smoke, but they are not all heartless."

"What are you getting at, Father Cadédis?" Marcel asked. "Not so much diplomacy. Come to the point."

"This is what I am getting at," the hair-dresser answered, waving towards the back of his shop. "In there, hanging on a hook, I have a little black silk frock that you gentlemen would doubtless recognize, since you know its owner, and since she has not a very elaborate wardrobe. Mademoiselle Mimi sent me this frock at daybreak, so even if she has not come to Rougette's

rescue she is not precisely rolling in wealth herself."

"That is strange," Marcel said, walking into the room at the back of the shop without considering the poor woman in the plaid gown. "Mimi's song was a false prophecy, since she has pawned her frock after all. But what the devil will she go about in today?"

Eugène had followed his friend.

The hair-dresser was not deceiving them. Mademoiselle Pinson's unique gown was hanging humbly and sadly in a dusty corner.

"That is indeed her frock," Marcel said. "I have known this garment intimately since I saw it quite new a year and a half ago. It is the dressing-gown, the riding-habit and the dress uniform of Mademoiselle Mimi. There should be a spot the size of five sous on the left sleeve and it was caused by drinking champagne. How much did you lend on it, Father Cadédis? At least I suppose she did not sell her frock and that it is here only as security."

"I lent her four francs," the hair-dresser answered, "and I assure you, sir, that it was pure charity. I would not have lent any one else more than forty sous. The silk is damnably shabby—it is like a magic lantern if you hold it up to the light. But I am sure that Mademoiselle Mimi will pay me. She is good for four francs."

"Poor Mimi!" Marcel said, "I will bet you my cap that she borrowed it for Rougette."

"Or to pay some pressing debt," Eugène said.

"No," Marcel said, "I know Mimi, and I think her incapable of stripping herself for a creditor."

"You are probably right," the hair-dresser said. "I

knew Mademoiselle Mimi when her situation was much better than it is now, and she had a great many debts. Every day, one of her creditors had something seized, and they ended by taking all of her furniture except her bed, which as you gentlemen doubtless know a creditor is not allowed to seize. Mademoiselle Mimi had four very becoming frocks at that time. She put them on one over the other, and went to bed in all of them so that they would not be seized. That is why I should be surprised to discover that she has pawned her only frock to pay a creditor."

"Poor Mimi!" Marcel said again. "But how is she managing? Has she some other garment that she has concealed from her friends? Perhaps she is ill from too much cake, and then she does not need to dress herself. No matter, Father Cadédis, this frock grieves me with its sleeves hanging down supplicatingly. Take back four francs of the thirty-five livres you have just lent me, and wrap up the frock so that I can take it to this child. Now then, Eugène, what does your Christian charity say to that?"

"That you are right to do as you are doing," Eugène answered, "but that I am not necessarily wrong. I will make a bet with you, if you like."

"Taken," Marcel said, "we will bet a cigar, as the members of the Jockey Club do. Moreover, you have nothing more to do here. I have thirty-one francs, so we are rich. Let us go to Mademoiselle Pinson. I am curious to see her."

He took the frock under his arm, and they left the shop.

VII

"Mademoiselle has gone to mass," the concierge told the two students when they arrived at the residence of Mademoiselle Pinson.

"To mass!" Eugène exclaimed.

"To mass!" Marcel echoed. "That is impossible. She has not gone out. Let us go up, we are old friends."

"I assure you, sir," the concierge answered, "that she went out to mass about three quarters of an hour ago."

"And to what church did she go?"

"To Saint Sulpice, where she always goes. She never misses a morning."

"Yes, yes, I know that she prays to the good God, but I think her going out today is rather bizarre."

"There she is coming back, sir. She is turning into the street. You can see her yourself."

Mademoiselle Pinson was indeed returning from church. As soon as Marcel saw her he ran towards her to see her costume more closely. Instead of a frock she was wearing a dark cotton petticoat half hidden by a green woollen curtain that she had made into a fairly successful shawl. This unusual apparel excited no attention because it was dark, and her head in its charming little white bonnet and her little feet in their slippers came out of it very prettily. She had draped her curtain so cleverly that its borders hardly showed and it really looked like an old shawl. In a word, she was still delightful in her rag-bag, and she gave this earth one more proof that a pretty woman is always pretty.

"How do you like me?" she asked the two young men,

turning her curtain a little and letting them see her fine figure in its corset. "This is a morning frock that Palmyre has just brought me."

"You look charming," Marcel told her. "I could never have believed that any one could look so well in a window's shawl."

"Really?" Mademoiselle Pinson said. "I think I must look rather like a parcel."

"A parcel of roses," Marcel answered. "I am almost sorry now that I brought your frock."

"My frock? Where did you find it?"

"Where it was, apparently."

"And you rescued it from slavery?"

"God, yes, I paid its ransom. Are you annoyed by my audacity?"

"Far from it! I am in your debt until I can return the compliment. I am glad to have my frock. To tell you the truth, we have lived together so long that I have unconsciously attached myself to it."

While she was chattering, Mademoiselle Pinson was climbing the five flights that led to her little room, and the two friends went in with her.

"I am only giving you back your frock on one condition," Marcel said.

"Fie on you!" the grisette said. "How silly to make conditions! I refuse to have them."

"I made a bet," Marcel explained. "You must tell us truthfully why you pawned it."

"Let me put it on before I tell you," Mademoiselle Pinson requested. "But I warn you that if you do not wish to make my wardrobe or the eaves into a

waiting-room, you must veil your faces like Agamemnon while I get into it."

"That isn't necessary," Marcel said. "We are more honourable than people suppose, and I will not open even one eye."

"Wait a minute," Mademoiselle Pinson answered. "I have every confidence in you, but the wisdom of the ages tells us that two precautions are better than one."

At the same time, she slipped out of her curtain and threw it over the heads of the two friends so neatly that they were entirely blind.

"Don't move," she told them. "I won't be a minute."

"Be careful," Marcel said. "If there is a hole in the curtain, I refuse to be responsible. You were not satisfied with our word, and consequently we consider it redeemed."

"Happily my frock is also," Mademoiselle Pinson said. "And so am I," she added, laughing and throwing the curtain on the floor. "Poor little frock, it seems quite new again. I like feeling myself back inside it."

"Now you must tell us the secret. Be honest, we are no gossips. Why did a prudent, sober, virtuous and modest young person like you pull down her whole wardrobe from the hook with one jerk?"

"Why? . . . Why?" Mademoiselle Pinson answered, seeming to hesitate. Then she took each of the youths by an arm and pushed them through the door. "Come and see."

As Marcel expected, she took them to the Rue de l'Éperon.

VIII

Marcel won his bet. Mademoiselle Pinson's piece of cake and her four francs were on Rougette's table with what was left of Eugène's chicken.

The sick girl was a little better, but she was still in bed, and however grateful she might be towards her unknown benefactor she had her friend tell the young gentlemen that she begged them to excuse her being too ill to receive them.

"How much that is like her!" Marcel said. "If she were dying alone in her garret, she would still play the duchess for the benefit of her water-jug."

The two friends were regretfully obliged to go home as they had come, not without laughing at such pride and such propriety so oddly lodged under a roof.

They dined together after their day at the medical college, and after dinner they walked along the Boulevard des Italiens, while Marcel smoked the cigar he had won that morning.

"After all that," Marcel asked, "won't you agree that I have some reason to love these poor creatures, and even to esteem them? Consider it seriously from a philosophical point of view. Didn't this little Mimi, whom you slandered so basely, do a more praiseworthy, a more meritorious and even a more Christian deed when she stripped herself of her frock than good King Robert did when he let the poor man cut off the fringe of his mantle? For one thing, good King Robert evidently had quantities of mantles, and for another thing, he was at dinner when a beggar crawled up to him and cut off the gold fringe. Her majesty the queen

did not approve of what the beggar had done, and nevertheless the king pardoned the clipper of fringes; but perhaps he had enjoyed his dinner. Consider the distance between him and Mimi! When Mimi heard of Rougette's misfortunes she had not breakfasted, for you may be sure that the piece of cake she took with her was intended to compose her own repast. Now, what did she do? Instead of breakfasting, she went to mass and showed herself at least the equal of King Robert, who was undoubtedly extremely pious, but who wasted his time chanting while the Normans played the devil. King Robert gave up his fringe and kept his mantle. Mimi sent her whole frock to Father Cadédis, and that was an incomparable deed, because Mimi is a woman and she is young and pretty and fond of pretty frocks and poor. Do not forget, moreover, that her frock is necessary if she goes to the shop to earn her daily bread. She not only gave up the piece of cake she was about to swallow, she also voluntarily put herself in the way of having no dinner. Realize also that Father Cadédis is far from being a beggar, and from crawling under tables. King Robert made no great sacrifice when he gave up his fringe, because it was cut before he saw the beggar and no one knows that it wasn't cut too badly to be sewed on again, but Mimi did not wait for her frock to be stolen. She snatched it from her poor body, although it was more precious and more useful than the glittering productions of all the lace-makers and embroiderers in Paris. She went out dressed in a curtain, but be sure that she would only have gone to church. She would cut off an arm rather than be seen in the Luxembourg or the Tuileries

tied up like that, but she dared show herself to God, because she prays at that hour every day. You must believe, Eugène, that when she wore her curtain through the Place Saint Michel, the Rue de Tournon and the Rue du Petit Lion, where she knows everyone, she showed more courage, more humility and more true religion than there is in all those hymns of good King Robert's that the world has been talking about from the day of the great Bossuet to the day of the depressing Anquetil; and nevertheless, Mimi will die unknown up in her room on some fifth floor, between a pot of flowers and a hem."

"So much better for her," Eugène said.

"If I wished to go on with my comparisons," Marcel said, "I could draw a parallel between Mucius Scævola and Rougette. Do you suppose that a Roman of Nero's time suffered any more when he held his arm over a brazier for five minutes than a contemporary grisette suffered from fasting twenty-four hours? Neither of them cried out, but examine their reasons. Mucius was in the midst of a camp and in the presence of the Etruscan king he had tried to kill. He had failed pitiably and he was in the hands of the police. What did he think up? A piece of bravado. Simply to be admired before he was hanged, he reddened his fist over a brazier, and there is nothing to prove that the brazier was very hot or that his fist fell down in ashes. Thereupon, the worthy Porsena was stupefied by his braggadocio and pardoned him and sent him home. No doubt the said Porsena, who was capable of such a pardon, had a good face and Scævola suspected that he would save his head by sacrificing his arm. Rougette, on

the contrary, patiently endured hunger, which is the slowest and the most horrible torture, and no one was watching her. She was alone in her garret, and she did not have the visible admiration of Porsena, that is to say the baron, of the Romans, that is to say her neighbours, of the Etruscans, that is to say her creditors, and she hadn't even the brazier, because her stove was empty. Why, then, suffer without murmuring? From vanity, in the first place, but Mucius was no better. From greatness of soul, in the next place, and that is her glory. She was dumb behind her bolted door so that her friends would not know she was dying, so that they would not have pity for her courage, and so that her devoted comrade Pinson would not be obliged to part with her frock and her cake. If Mucius had been in Rougette's place, he would have pretended to die in silence, but he would have done it at a crossing or at Flicoteaux's door. His silent and sublime pride would have been one way of asking the assistance of a glass of wine or a crust. Rougette did ask a louis of the baron, whom I persist in calling Porsena. That strikes the eye of the least clairvoyant person. But don't you see that the baron must owe Rougette for some personal favours? As you wisely said, the baron may be in the country and then Rougette is lost. And do not think you can answer with that vain objection people make to all the admirable actions of women when they say that women do not know what they are doing, and that they run after danger as cats run on eaves. Rougette knows what death is. She was near it at the Pont d'Iéna. She has already jumped into the Seine once, and I asked her if she suffered. She

said that she felt nothing until the boatmen who fished her out scraped her head against their boat."

"That's quite enough," Eugène said. "Spare me your frightful pleasantries. Answer me seriously. Do you think that these horrible ordeals which are constantly repeated and constantly threatening finally have some result? Have these poor unprotected girls enough good sense to learn something from experience? Can they come to any good end, in spite of their follies, or is there a demon that vows them to eternal frivolity and misery? One of them prays, you say. She goes to church, fulfils her duties, and lives respectably by her own work. Her friends seem to respect her, and even you bad characters do not treat her with your usual lightness. Another passes unceasingly from follies to want, from prodigality to the horrors of hunger. Surely she will remember this cruel lesson a long time. Do you think that with good advice, carefully regulated conduct, and a little help, one could make rational beings of such women? If you do think so, tell me. An opportunity is offered to us. Let us go back to this wretched Rougette. She is doubtless still in bed and her old friend is watching beside her. I would like to lead them back into the right path, to speak sincerely to them. I would not preach to them or reproach them, but I would walk up to this bed and take both their hands, and I would say to them . . ."

The two friends were just passing Tortoni's. The profiles of two women who were eating ices near a window stood out in the light of the chandeliers. One of them waved her handkerchief and the other laughed gaily.

"God!" Marcel exclaimed. "If you still want to talk to them, we need not go far. There they are, God forgive me! I recognize Mimi's frock, and that white feather of Rougette's is always waving above nectar and ambrosia. Apparently the baron has arranged matters."

IX

"And doesn't such folly frighten you?" Eugène asked.

"It does," Marcel said, "but when you speak severely of grisettes, make an exception of the little Pinson, I beg you. She told us a good story at supper, she pawned her frock for four francs and she made herself a shawl of a curtain. And whoever tells what he knows, gives what he has, and does what he can, is not obliged to do more."

THE ETRUSCAN VASE

BY PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

AUGUSTE SAINT CLAIR was not precisely loved by what people call the world, and the principal reason was that he tried to please only the people who pleased him. He sought them out and avoided every one else, and he was casual and absent-minded when he was with people who bored him. When he was leaving the Italian theatre one evening, the Marquise A—— asked him how Mademoiselle Sontag had sung. "Yes, madame," Saint Clair answered, smiling agreeably and thinking of something else. She could not put his ridiculous answer down to shyness, because he spoke to a great man, to a man who came of a great house, and even to a lady of fashion, with as much self-possession as if he had been conversing with a mere equal. The marquise decided that Saint Clair was a prodigy of impertinence and conceit.

Madame B—— invited him to dinner on a certain Monday. She talked to him a great deal, and as he left he said that he had never seen a more charming woman. Madame B—— accumulated witticisms at other people's houses for a month, and spent them at home in one evening. Saint Clair saw her again on the Thursday of that same week. He was slightly bored. After one more visit, he decided never to appear in her drawing-room again. Madame B—— published

abroad that Saint Clair was a young man without manners and of the worst possible breeding.

He was born with a tender and loving heart, but at the age when a boy easily receives impressions that last all his life, his overflowing emotions had become the joke of his school-fellows. He was proud, and as sensitive to other people's opinions as most children are. After that, he made a study of hiding what seemed to him a disgraceful weakness. He succeeded, at great expense. He could hide the disturbances of his tender heart from other people, but when they were shut up in himself they became a hundred times more agonizing. In his world, he won the unfortunate reputation of coldness and heartlessness, and in solitude his restless imagination created torments more frightful than he would ever have confessed.

A friend is undoubtedly hard to find. Perhaps impossible. Perhaps there have never been two men who had no secret from each other. Saint Clair did not quite believe in friendship, and people knew it. The young men in society found him cold and reserved. He never asked them about their secrets, and everything he thought and nearly everything he did was a mystery to them. Frenchmen like talking of themselves, and Saint Clair received many confidences in spite of himself. His friends—this word describes the men he saw twice a week—complained that he did not trust them. People who tell a man their secrets without being asked are usually offended if they do not learn his. There should be reciprocity in indiscretion.

"He is a perfect oyster," said a good-looking major called Alphonse de Thémines. "I could never have the

slightest confidence in that devil of a Saint Clair."

"I think he is something of a Jesuit," Jules Lambert answered. "A man told me on his honour that he had met Saint Clair twice as he was leaving Saint Sulpice. Nobody knows what he thinks, and I never could be easy with him."

They separated, and Alphonse met Saint Clair on the Boulevard des Italiens, walking along with his head bent and his eyes on the pavement. Alphonse stopped him and took his arm, and before they came to the Rue de la Paix he had told Saint Clair the whole story of his affair with Madame ——, who had such a jealous brute of a husband.

Jules Lambert lost at écarté the same evening. He turned to dancing for consolation and happened to elbow another man who had lost money and was in an equally bad humour. A few sharp words and an appointment followed. Jules asked Saint Clair to be his second, and borrowed some money that he forgot to pay back.

After all, Saint Clair was easy enough to get along with. His faults hurt no one except himself, and he was obliging, frequently amiable, and seldom boring. He had travelled a great deal and read a great deal, and he talked of journeys and books only when people insisted. Moreover, he was tall and his figure was good. His face was fine and intelligent, and although it was nearly always too serious, his smile made it less austere.

I was forgetting an important point. Saint Clair was always attentive to women, and talked to them rather than to men. No one could decide whether or

not he was in love, but every one was sure that if so cold a creature could feel love, the charming Countess Mathilde de Coursy must be its object. She was a young widow, and people noticed that he was constantly talking to her. There were three reasons for believing in their intimacy. The first one was his habit of never willingly speaking her name in public and of never praising her if he had to speak of her. The second one was that before Saint Clair knew her, he loved music passionately and the countess had a taste for painting, and that after they knew each other their tastes were exchanged. And the last reason was that when the countess went to her spa the year before, Saint Clair had left Paris six days afterwards.

My duty as an historian obliges me to say that on a certain night during the month of July a gate in the park wall of a country house opened a few minutes before sunrise and a man came out with all the precautions of a thief. The country house was Madame de Coursy's, and the man was Saint Clair. A woman who was wrapped in a cape went to the gate with him and then slipped outside to see him a few minutes more as he went down the path that ran along the wall. Saint Clair stopped, threw a cautious glance around him, and waved to her to go back. The clear summer night allowed him to see that she was standing quite still in the same place. He walked back and took her tenderly in his arms. He was asking her to go in, but he had a hundred other things to tell her. They talked for ten minutes, and then they heard the voice of a peasant who was going to his work in the fields. A

kiss was given and taken, the gate was closed, and Saint Clair was at the end of the path in one leap.

He was following a road that he seemed to know. Sometimes he almost skipped with joy and ran along tapping the shrubs with his stick. Sometimes he stopped or walked along slowly, looking up at the sky which was becoming purple in the east. Any one who saw him would have thought that he was a lunatic enjoying his escape from his cell. After half an hour's walk, he came to the door of an isolated little house that he had taken for the summer. He unlocked the door with his key, and went in. He threw himself down on a wide sofa and with his eyes transfixed and his mouth curved in a happy smile, he meditated and dreamed wide awake. His imagination brought him only happy ideas. "How fortunate I am!" he said to himself every second. "At last I have found a heart that understands mine. I have both a friend and a mistress. What a mind! What a passionate soul! No, she can never have loved until she loved me." And soon, since vanity always slips into the affairs of this world, "She is the most beautiful woman in Paris," he thought, "and she chose me when she had the world to choose from. The pick of society were her admirers. That colonel of hussars, handsome, brave—and not quite a fool. That young writer who paints such nice water-colours, and who plays proverbs so well. That Russian Lovelace who knows the Balkans and who served under Diebitch. And Camille T—— who is certainly clever, and who has delightful manners and a magnificent sabre cut on his forehead. She dismissed them all." And then came the refrain of his song, "How fortunate

I am! How fortunate I am!" He could hardly breathe, and he went over and opened a window. He walked about the room and then rolled over on his sofa.

Saint Clair was tired. He yawned and stretched his arms and noticed that the sun was up. He must think of going to sleep. When he woke, he looked at his watch and found that he had just time to dress and hurry off to lunch in Paris.

They had just opened another bottle of champagne —I leave the reader to imagine its number. They had come to the time which comes quickly enough at a bachelor's party, the time when every one wants to talk at the same minute, and when the strong heads begin to worry about the weak heads.

"I wish," said Alphonse de Thémines, who never lost a chance of talking about England, "I wish it was the thing in Paris, as it is in London, for every man to toast his mistress. Then we should know whom our friend Saint Clair sighs for." As he spoke, he filled his own glass, and those of his neighbours.

Saint Clair was a little embarrassed, but he was about to answer when Jules Lambert prevented him.

"I am heartily in favour of the custom," he said, "and I adopt it." And, raising his glass, "To all the milliners in Paris! I except only those over thirty, the one-eyed and the one-legged."

"Hear! Hear!" the young Anglomaniacs shouted.

Saint Clair rose with his glass in his hand.

"Gentlemen," he said, "my heart is not so vast as our friend Jules's, but it is more faithful. My fidelity

is even more meritorious, because I have long been separated from the lady of my thoughts. I am sure you will approve my choice unless you are already my rivals. To Judith Pasta, gentlemen! May we soon have the first tragedienne of Europe back again!"

Thémines wanted to object to the toast, but applause interrupted him. Saint Clair had parried the thrust, and thought himself safe for the rest of the afternoon.

The conversation straightway fell on the theatres. By way of the dramatic censor, it passed to politics. From Lord Wellington they passed to English horses, and from English horses to women by a connection easy to seize. A good horse is the first thing a young man wants and a pretty mistress is the second.

Then they discussed ways of acquiring these two desirable objects. Horses can be bought and so can women, but those women were not the point. Saint Clair modestly pleaded his slight experience in this delicate matter, and was of the opinion that the way to please a woman is to make oneself unique, to be different from other people. But he feared there was no general formula for being unique.

"So you think," Jules said, "that a cripple or a hunchback is more likely to please a woman than a straight man made like the rest of the world?"

"You are pushing things too far," Saint Clair answered, "but I accept the responsibility of my suggestion, if I must. If I were a hunchback, I would not blow out my brains, and I would make conquests. To begin with, I would try only two kinds of women—those who are really tender-hearted, and the numerous women who want to be thought eccentric, as they say in England.

With the tender hearts, I would paint the horror of my situation, the cruelty nature had shown me. I would try to make them pity me. I would let them suspect that I was capable of passionate love. I would kill one of my rivals in a duel, and I would poison myself with a mild dose of laudanum. After a few months they would no longer see my hump, and then I would watch for the first fit of emotion. As for women who lay claim to originality, their conquest is easy. Only convince them that it is a duly established rule for hunchbacks to have no luck with women, and they will immediately insist on giving the lie to the general rule."

"What a Don Juan!" Jules exclaimed.

"We must break our legs," Colonel Beaujeu said, "since we have the misfortune not to be hunchbacks."

"I am entirely of Saint Clair's opinion," said Hector Roquantin, who was only about three and a half feet tall. "Every day one sees the most beautiful and elegant women giving themselves to men you handsome fellows would never be afraid of . . ."

"Hector, do go over and ring for more wine," Thémines said, with the most natural air in the world.

The dwarf stood up, and every one remembered the fable of the fox who had his tail cut off.

"For my part," Thémines went on, "the longer I live, the oftener I see that a passable figure," and he looked complacently at the mirror opposite him, "a passable figure and some taste in clothes are the way of being unique that wins over the most cruel women." He flipped off a bread crumb that had fastened itself to a lapel of his coat.

"Bah!" the dwarf cried, "with a fine figure and a coat

from Staub you get women you can look at for a week and talk to one afternoon. You must have something else to make women love you, really love you . . . You must . . ."

"Do you want a conclusive example?" Thémines interrupted. "You all knew Massigny, and you know what kind of man he was. Manners like an English groom's, conversation like his horse's. But he looked like Adonis and wore his tie like Brummel. Take him all in all, he was the greatest bore I ever knew."

"He almost bored me to death once," Colonel Beaujeu said. "Can you believe that I had to travel two hundred leagues with him?"

"Do you know," Saint Clair asked, "that he caused the death of poor Richard Thornton?"

"But," Jules answered, "don't you know that Thornton was killed by bandits near Fondi?"

"That is true. But you will see that Massigny was at least an accomplice in the crime. Several travellers, Thornton among them, had arranged to ride to Naples in a party because of the bandits. Massigny asked to join the caravan. As soon as Thornton heard that, he rode on alone, and I am sure he was afraid of having to spend a few days with Massigny. You know the rest."

"Thornton was right," Thémines said, "and of two deaths, he chose the pleasanter. Any one would have done the same thing in his place." Then, after a pause, "So you agree that Massigny was the most tiresome man in the world."

"We agree," they all said at once.

"We must not give any man too bad a name," Jules said. "Make an exception in favour of ——, particularly when he is elucidating his political schemes."

"Now," Thémines went on, "you will also agree with me that Madame de Coursy is a clever woman if there is one."

There was silence for a moment. Saint Clair looked down and imagined that every eye was fixed on him.

"Who can doubt it?" he finally said, bent over his plate, and showing great interest in the flowers painted on the porcelain.

"I maintain," Jules said, raising his voice, "that she is one of the three most fascinating women in Paris."

"I knew her husband," the colonel said. "He often showed me charming letters from his wife."

"Auguste," Hector Roquantin interrupted, "do present me to the countess. People say that you make fair or foul weather with her."

"In the autumn," Saint Clair murmured, "when she is back in Paris. I believe she does not receive in the country."

Nobody spoke. Saint Clair shook in his chair like a prisoner at the bar.

"You had not met the countess three years ago, Saint Clair. You were in Germany then," Thémines continued, with distracting calmness. "You have no idea what she was then—beautiful, fresh as a rose, vivacious above all, and as gay as a butterfly. And so you know which of her adorers had the honour of her favours? Massigny! The most foolish man in the world and the most intelligent woman. Do you think

a hunchback could have done that? Give up and take my word for it—have a fine figure, a good tailor, and be bold."

Saint Clair was in an atrocious position. He was about to call Thémines a liar, but he was afraid of compromising the countess. He wanted to defend her, but his tongue was frozen. His lips were trembling with rage, and he could think of no other excuse for beginning a quarrel.

"What!" Jules cried, with the air of being surprised. "Madame de Coursy gave herself to Massigny! Frailty, thy name is woman!"

"How unimportant a woman's reputation is!" Saint Clair said in a dry contemptuous tone. "Any one can tear it into bits so that he may play the wit, and . . ." As he spoke, he remembered with horror a certain Etruscan vase that he had seen a hundred times on the countess's mantel in Paris. He knew that Massigny had brought it to her from Italy, and she had taken the vase from Paris to the country. And every night she put her bouquet in the Etruscan vase.

His words died on his lips. He saw only one thing, thought of only one thing—the Etruscan vase.

Thémines was enjoying himself too much to be offended by Saint Clair's tone. He answered with a light friendly air.

"I am only repeating what people said. Whatever happened, happened when you were in Germany. I scarcely know Madame de Coursy—I have not been in her house for a year and a half. Perhaps we are wrong, and Massigny invented the story he told me. But to go back to our subject. If the example I gave you is

false, I am still right. You all know the most brilliant woman in Paris, the woman whose books . . ."

The door opened, and Théodore Néville came in. He was just back from Egypt.

"Théodore! Back so soon!" He was overwhelmed with questions.

"Did you bring back a real Turkish costume?" Thémines asked. "And an Arabian horse and an Egyptian groom?"

"What kind of man is the khedive?" Jules asked. "When will he assert his independence? Did you see a head cut off with one stroke of a sword?"

"And the dancing girls?" Roquantin asked. "Are the women good-looking in Cairo?"

"Did you see General L——?" Colonel Beaujeu asked. "How has he organized the khedive's army? Did Colonel C—— give you a sword for me?"

"And the pyramids? and the cataracts of the Nile? and the statue of Memnon? And Ibrahim pasha? . . ." Saint Clair thought of nothing except the Etruscan vase . . .

He went away as soon as he could and rode back to his country house. His horse's gallop kept him from following his ideas clearly, but he felt vaguely that his happiness in this world was destroyed forever, and that he had only a dead man and an Etruscan vase to blame.

When he was back at home, he threw himself on the same sofa where he had so slowly and deliciously analysed his happiness. The idea he had caressed most lovingly was that his mistress was not like other women—that she had never loved any man except him and that she would never love any man except him.

Now his beautiful dream disappeared before the sadness and cruelty of the truth. "I possess a beautiful woman, and that is all. She is also a brilliant woman, which makes her loving Massigny worse. She does love me now . . . with all her soul . . . as she is capable of loving. To be loved as Massigny was! . . . She has yielded to my anxieties, to my whims, to my appeals! But I have been deceiving myself. There can never have been any real sympathy between our hearts. Massigny and I are all the same to her. He was handsome, and she loved him for his good looks. I sometimes amuse madame. 'Well then, I will be in love with Saint Clair, since the other man is dead. And if Saint Clair dies or bores me, we shall see.' "

I firmly believe that the devil is always invisibly near an unhappy soul who is tormenting himself as Saint Clair was doing. The spectacle is amusing to the enemy of mankind, and when the victim feels his wounds healing, the devil is there to open them again.

Saint Clair thought he heard a voice murmuring in his ear

"The singular honour
Of being the successor. . . ."

He sat up and looked around furiously. He would have been delighted to find some one in the room, and he would undoubtedly have torn the man to pieces.

The clock struck eight. At half-past eight the countess would be expecting him. Suppose he did not go? He lay back on the sofa and shut his eyes. "I am sleepy," he told himself. He did not move for half a minute, then he jumped up and ran over to see the

clock's progress. "How I wish it were half-past eight," he thought. "Then it would be too late for me to start." He could not find the courage to stay at home, and he wanted some excuse. He would have liked to be very ill. He walked up and down the room and then he took a book and sat down and could not read a syllable. He went to the piano and did not have the courage to open it. He whistled and looked at the clouds and he tried to count the poplars in front of the windows. He turned to the clock after all this, and found that it had only managed to tick off three minutes. "I cannot help loving her," he cried, grinding his teeth and stamping his foot. "She dominates me, I am her slave—as Massigny was before me. Obey her, wretched creature, since you are too cowardly to break a chain that you hate."

He took his hat and dashed out.

He slowly climbed the path that led to the park gate, and in the distance he saw a white figure against the dark trees. She was waving a handkerchief as if to give him a signal. His heart beat violently and his knees trembled. He could not speak, and he had become so self-conscious that he was afraid the countess would see his wretchedness in his face.

He took the hand she held out to him, and kissed her forehead because she threw herself in his arms. He followed her into her boudoir, silent, and choking down with agony the sobs that seemed determined to split his throat.

A single candle lighted the boudoir. Both of them sat down. Saint Clair noticed a rose in his mistress's hair. The day before he had brought her an English

print engraved after Lely's portrait of the Duchess of Portland. The duchess's hair was simply arranged with a rose, and Saint Clair had said, "I like this rose better than your elaborate arrangements." He did not like jewels, and he agreed with the nobleman who said that the devil himself could not understand over-dressed women and over-caparisoned horses. As he was playing with a string of the countess's pearls the evening before, he had said, "Jewels are only good for hiding defects. You are too lovely to wear them, Mathilde." The countess remembered his most casual words, and this evening she was not wearing any jewels. The first thing he always noticed about a woman's clothes was her shoes, and, like a great many other people, he had violent prejudices about them. A heavy shower had fallen just before sunset, and the grass was still damp, but the countess had walked across the lawn in thin silk stockings and black satin slippers . . . Suppose she should be ill?

"She does love me," Saint Clair said to himself.

And he sighed for himself and for his folly, and smiled at Mathilde unwillingly, divided between his wretchedness and the satisfaction of seeing a pretty woman try to please him with all the little nothings that mean so much to lovers. The countess's radiant face showed a mingling of love and lively malice that made her still more charming. She picked up something that was in a Japanese lacquered box, and held out her small hand with the object hidden.

"I broke your watch the other day," she said. "Here it is mended."

She gave him the watch, looked at him tenderly and

mischievously, and bit her lower lip as if to keep herself from laughing. "God, how beautiful!" he thought, as he saw how white her teeth were against her red lips.

A man looks a perfect fool when he is receiving a pretty woman's cajoleries coldly. Saint Clair thanked her, and took the watch and was about to put in his pocket.

"Look at it," she said. "Open it and see if it is properly mended. You were at the Polytechnic School, and you know about such things."

"I know little enough," Saint Clair said. But he opened the watch without much interest, and found a miniature of Madame de Coursy painted on the inside of the case. How could he go on sulking after that? His forehead cleared, and he thought no more of Massigny. He only remembered that he was with a charming woman, and that she adored him.

The lark, that messenger of dawn, began to sing, and long bands of pale light streaked the clouds in the east. It was then that Romeo said farewell to Juliet. It is the classic hour for lovers' partings.

Saint Clair was standing in front of the mantel with the key of the park gate in his hand, and his eyes attentively fixed on the Etruscan vase. He still had a grudge against it in the bottom of his heart. But he was very happy, and he had already begun to consider the idea that Thémines might have been lying. The countess was going to the park gate with him, and while she was wrapping a scarf about her head, he struck the key gently against the odious vase. He gradually in-

creased the force of his blows, so that any one would have thought he was breaking it to pieces.

"Heavens, be careful!" Mathilde called to him. "You will break my beautiful Etruscan vase!"

Saint Clair was displeased, but he was resigned. He turned his back on the mantel to avoid temptation, and opened his watch to look at the miniature.

"Who was the painter?" he asked..

"Monsieur R——. Massigny introduced him to me." (After Massigny went to Rome, he discovered that he had an exquisite taste in the fine arts, and became the Mæcenas of all young artists.) "I really think the portrait is like me, though it is rather too flattering."

Saint Clair wanted to throw the watch against the wall, which would have made it hard to mend again. But he controlled himself and put it back in his pocket. Then he told Mathilde that it was too light for her to go with him. He left the house, crossed the park quickly, and in a moment he was alone in the country.

"Massigny, Massigny!" he cried, all his rage centred in that one name, "must I find you everywhere! Undoubtedly the painter who did this miniature had already painted her for Massigny. Imbecile that I was, I believed that she loved me with a love equal to mine . . . and merely because she was wearing no jewels . . . she has drawers full of them . . . Massigny, who saw nothing but women's fripperies, loved jewels. Yes, she is amiable, one must admit. She knows how to adopt the tastes of her lovers. God, I would a thousand times rather she had given herself for money. Then I could at least believe that she loves me, since she is my mistress and I do not pay her."

An even more painful idea offered itself to him. The countess's year of widowhood would end in a few weeks. Saint Clair was to marry her when she was out of mourning. He had promised. Not precisely promised. He had never spoken of it, but he wanted to marry her, and the countess knew that he did. That was as binding as an oath for him. The day before, he would have given a throne to hasten the moment when he could publicly proclaim his love. Now he shivered at the idea of marrying the woman who had been Massigny's mistress.

"But I must," he told himself, "and I will. She probably thinks that I know all about her old intrigue. They said the thing was quite open. And besides, she does not know me. She thinks that I love her as Massigny loved her."

And with some pride he said to himself, "For three months she has made me the happiest of men. That happiness demands the sacrifice of my whole life."

Instead of trying to sleep, he rode through the forest all the morning. In an avenue of Verrières wood, a man on a fine English horse called him and came over to him at once. It was Alphonse de Thémines. In Saint Clair's state of mind he wanted to be alone, and meeting Thémines of all people changed his bad humour to absolute rage. Thémines did not notice his anger, or he took a malicious pleasure in annoying him if he did. He talked and laughed and joked, all without seeming to notice that he was the only one who spoke. Saint Clair turned his horse into a narrow path and hoped that his tormentor would not follow him. He was wrong—tormentors do not let go their vic-

tims so easily. Thémines wheeled about and rode beside Saint Clair to continue the conversation more comfortably.

The two horses could barely walk abreast, and although Thémines was a very good horseman, he could hardly avoid touching Saint Clair's foot as he rode beside him. But Saint Clair was so angry that he could not restrain himself any longer. He stood up in his stirrups and struck Thémines's horse on the nose with his whip.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Auguste?" Thémines exclaimed. "Why are you beating my horse?"

"Why are you following me?" Saint Clair answered in a terrible voice.

"Are you losing your wits, Saint Clair? Have you forgotten that you are speaking to me?"

"I know well enough that I am speaking to a fool."

"Saint Clair! . . . you are mad I think . . . listen. You will beg my pardon tomorrow, or you will give me satisfaction for your insults."

"Until tomorrow, then, sir."

Thémines stopped his horse. Saint Clair hurried his on, and disappeared in the wood.

He felt calmer. He was weak enough to believe in presentiments and he felt sure that he would be killed the next day and that all his difficulties would be solved. Still one day to live through. Tomorrow, no more fears, no more torments. He went home and sent his servant to Colonel Beaujeu with a note. He wrote some letters, and then he dined and was careful to be outside the park gate at exactly half-past eight.

"What is worrying you today, Auguste?" the countess asked. "You are unusually gay, and yet all your witticisms can not make me laugh. Yesterday I was so gay and you were almost cross. Today we have changed rôles. I have a frightful headache."

"My beautiful sweetheart, I admit that I was tedious yesterday. But this morning I went for a ride, and I feel wonderfully well."

"I slept late this morning, and I had some tiresome dreams."

"Ah, dreams? Do you believe in dreams?"

"How foolish!"

"I believe in them. I will lay a bet that one of your dreams foretold some tragic event."

"Heavens, I never remember my dreams! But I do remember now. I saw Massigny in my dream, so you see that it was nothing very amusing."

"Massigny! I should suppose, on the contrary, that you enjoyed seeing him again."

"Poor Massigny!"

"Poor Massigny?"

"Auguste, tell me what is wrong with you this evening. There is something diabolical in your smile. You look as if you were jeering at yourself."

"You are treating me as badly as your old friends the dowagers do."

"Yes, Auguste, today you look at me as you always look at people you dislike."

"Wicked woman! give me your hand."

He kissed her hand with ironic gallantry, and they looked at each other steadily for a minute. Saint

Clair lowered his eyes first, and exclaimed, "How hard I find living in this world without making people think me disagreeable! One should talk of nothing but the weather and hunting, or discuss their charities with your old friends."

He picked up a paper from a table.

"Here is your laundress's bill. Let us talk of that, my angel, and you will not be able to say that I am disagreeable."

"Truly, Auguste, you astonish me . . ."

"This spelling makes me think of a letter I ran across this morning. I must begin by telling you that I was arranging my papers. I do put my things in order now and then. I found a letter from a seamstress I was in love with when I was sixteen. She had her own way of spelling everything, and always the most complicated. Her style was worthy of her spelling. But I was something of a fool then, and I found a mistress who did not write like Sévigné unworthy of me. I left her abruptly. When I read her letter today, I realized that this seamstress must really have loved me."

"What! a woman you kept?"

"Very magnificently, on fifty francs a month. But my guardian did not make me any too large an allowance, because he thought that a young man who has money is likely to go to destruction and take other people with him."

"And what became of this woman?"

"How do I know? Probably she died in the almshouse."

"If she had, Auguste, you would not speak of her so casually."

"If I must tell the truth, she married a respectable man, and I gave her a little dowry when I was my own master."

"How kind you are! But why did you want to seem cruel?"

"Oh, of course I am kind. . . . The more I think of it, the more convinced I am that she loved me. But in those days I could not distinguish emotion in an absurd form."

"You should have brought me the letter. I should not have been jealous. We women have more intuition than men, and we can see at once from a letter's style whether the author is honest, or whether he is feigning a passion he does not feel."

"And yet women often let themselves be taken in by brutes or fools."

He looked at the Etruscan vase as he spoke, but Mathilde did not notice the perverse expression in his voice and in his eyes.

"You men all want to be thought Don Juans. You think we are being taken in, but often enough you find a Dona Juaña, still more of a rake than yourselves."

"I understand that with a lady's superior intelligence one can detect a fool a league away. But still I doubt that our friend Massigny died a virgin martyr."

"Massigny! But he was not such a fool. And besides, there are feminine fools. I must tell you a story about Massigny . . . but perhaps I have already told you?"

"Never," Saint Clair answered, in a trembling voice.

"When Massigny came back from Italy, he fell in

love with me. My husband knew him, and presented him to me as a man of wit and taste. They were made for each other. Massigny was very attentive from the beginning. He gave me some water-colours that he had bought at Schroth's, and said that he had painted them himself, and he talked of music and painting in a superior tone that was very diverting. He sent me an unbelievable letter one day. He told me, among other things, that I was the most virtuous woman in Paris, and for that reason he wanted to be my lover. I showed the letter to my cousin Julie. We were two silly things together, and we decided to play a joke on him. One evening we had some callers, Massigny among them. My cousin said to me, 'I am going to read you a declaration of love I received this morning.' She took the letter and read it amid shouts of laughter. . . . Poor Massigny!"

Saint Clair fell on his knees, crying out with joy. He seized the countess's hand and covered it with kisses and tears. Mathilde was astounded, and thought at first that he was ill. Saint Clair could only say, "Forgive me, forgive me." When he stood up, he was radiant. He was happier at that moment than on the day when Mathilde had first said to him, "I love you."

"I am the maddest and the guiltiest of men," he cried. "I have suspected you for two days, and I have not asked you for an explanation."

"You suspected me! And of what?"

"Oh, I am a scoundrel. Some one told me that you had loved Massigny, and . . ."

"Massigny!" She began to laugh. Then, quickly becoming serious, "Auguste," she said, "can you be mad

enough to have such suspicions, and hypocritical enough to hide them from me?"

There were tears in his eyes as he said, "Forgive me, I implore you."

"How can I help forgiving you, my dear? But let me swear to you . . ."

"I believe you, I believe you, do not tell me anything."

"But in heaven's name, what reason had you for suspecting such an unlikely thing?"

"None, none in the world, except in my own cursed head . . . and, you see, this Etruscan vase . . . I knew that Massigny gave it to you. . . ."

The countess clasped her hands in astonishment, then she laughed and exclaimed, "My Etruscan vase!"

Saint Clair could not help laughing himself, and still big tears were running down his cheeks. He seized Mathilde in his arms, and said to her, "I will not let you out until you have forgiven me."

"Yes, I forgive you, lunatic that you are," she said, kissing him tenderly. "You are making me very happy today. This is the first time I have seen you weep, and I thought you never wept."

Then, disengaging herself from his arms, she snatched up the Etruscan vase and broke it into a thousand pieces on the floor.

For the next few hours Saint Clair was the most mortified and the happiest of men.

"Well," Roquantin said to Colonel Beaujeu, whom he met the next evening at Tortoni's, "is the news true?"

"Too true, my dear fellow," the colonel said, in a sad tone.

"Tell me just how it happened."

"Very well. Saint Clair began by saying that he was in the wrong, but that he would rather be shot by Thémines than apologize to him. I could only approve. Thémines wanted chance to decide who shot first. Saint Clair insisted that it should be Thémines. Thémines shot. I saw Saint Clair turn all the way around once, and then he fell dead. I have seen wounded soldiers do the same thing."

"It is most extraordinary," Roquantin said. "And what did Thémines do?"

"Oh, what one does on such an occasion. He threw his pistol on the ground with an air of regret. He threw it so hard that he broke the cock. It is an English pistol, from Manton, and I doubt that he can find a gunsmith in Paris to make him another cock."

The countess saw no one for three years. She lived in her country-house winter and summer and hardly left her bedroom. A negro woman who had known Saint Clair served her, but the countess did not speak two words a day. At the end of the three years, her cousin Julie came back from a long journey. She forced her way in and found poor Mathilde so pale and thin that she thought she was looking at the corpse of the woman she had left beautiful and full of life. She managed to drag the countess to Hyères. She lingered there for three or four months more, and then she died of a disease of the lungs—caused by domestic sorrows, said Doctor M——, who had given her the benefit of his care.

THE JEWELS

BY GUY DE MAUPASSANT

A CERTAIN Monsieur Lantin met a young girl from the country at the house of his chief assistant, and he was caught in the net of love at once. She was the daughter of a tax-collector who had died a few months before and her mother brought her to Paris and took her about to the houses of her friends hoping to find a husband for her. They were poor and honest, and they lived quietly and unpretentiously. The girl's beauty had the charm of angelic modesty, the faint smile on her lips seemed to come from a tender heart, and no one doubted that she was one of those innocent girls to whom every young man dreams of trusting his whole life.

Every one who knew her sang her praises, and every one who knew her said over and over, "The man who wins her will be lucky—he could not do better."

Monsieur Lantin was chief clerk in the Ministry of the Interior at that time, and his salary was thirty-five hundred francs a year. He proposed for her and married her, and he was unbelievably happy. She managed his house so cleverly and so economically that they lived in luxury. She paid her husband all the delightful little attentions, and she was so affectionate and so charming that when he had been married to her for six years he loved her more than he had ever loved her before.

She had only two tastes that he did not like—she was

too fond of the theatre and too fond of imitation jewels. Her friends were the wives of unimportant officials and they often gave her boxes for popular plays—sometimes even for first nights. She was always dragging her husband with her and he found them unbearably tiresome after his day at the Ministry. He began begging her to ask some older woman who could bring her home after the play, and he was properly grateful when he managed to persuade her that the arrangement was perfectly respectable.

When she went to the theatre she naturally wanted to look her best, and her gowns always suited her though they were still simple. Her quiet charms and her irresistibly gentle smile seemed to acquire a fresh distinction from her simple gowns, but she began to put two enormous rhinestones in her ears and she wore strings of imitation pearls and bracelets and combs that played at being set with precious stones.

Her husband was distressed by this passion for false glitter, and he was always saying, "My dear, women who can not buy real jewels should adorn themselves only with their own beauty and charm, the rarest jewels after all."

But she always smiled sweetly and she always said, "What can I do about it? I love these things. I know you are right—they are my vice. I should have loved jewels."

Then she would slip the pearls round her fingers or hold the paste diamonds in the lamplight, and she always said, "See how beautifully they are made. One would swear they were real."

And he always smiled and said, "You have the tastes of a gypsy."

Sometimes, when they were alone by their fireside, she brought out the leather box that held what Monsieur Lantin called her trash. She put the box on the tea-table and then she examined her false jewels with such passionate interest that she seemed to be tasting a secret joy. Sometimes she insisted on fastening one of the necklaces around her husband's throat, and then she laughed and told him how absurd he looked and kissed him passionately.

One night she came home from the opera shivering with cold. The next morning she had a little cough and the next week she died of pneumonia.

Lantin almost followed her to the grave. His despair was so terrible that his hair was white in a month. He wept all day and his soul was torn by memories of the smile and the voice and all the charms of his dead wife. Time did not lessen his grief. When the other clerks in his office were talking over the news of the day they often saw his face twitch, and then his eyes filled with tears and he broke into sobs. He kept his wife's bedroom just as she had left it and he constantly shut himself up to think of her in that room where even her gowns were hanging just where she had kept them.

His existence soon became a struggle. His wife had found his salary quite enough for the household, but now it was hardly enough for him alone and he wondered how she had managed to give him the good wine and the good food that he could no longer buy with his small salary. He ran into debt and one morning when he found himself penniless a week before the end of the month he thought of selling some of his wife's imitation jewels—he still had a grudge against them in the

bottom of his heart and the mere sight of them left a little stain on the memory of his beloved.

He looked through the heap of tinsel that she had left. She had gone on buying it until the end of her life and nearly every day she had brought home a new treasure. He finally settled on a long string of diamonds that she had seemed to prefer and that he thought might be worth six or eight francs since it was of unusually fine workmanship for an imitation.

He put it in his pocket and walked along the boulevards towards the Ministry, looking for a responsible jeweller. He was ashamed to show his poverty by trying to sell something that would bring him only a few francs, but he went into a shop at last.

"I would like to ask what value you would put on this," he said to the shopkeeper.

The man looked at the string, turned it over and over, weighed it, looked at it again through a magnifying-glass, whispered something to his clerk, and then laid it on the counter and walked away to judge its effect from a distance. Monsieur Lantin was annoyed by so much ceremony and he was about to say that he knew it was worth very little when the jeweller said, "It is worth twelve or fifteen thousand francs, sir, but you will have to tell me exactly how you came by it."

The bereaved husband stared at the shopkeeper with his eyes and his mouth wide open. He was quite unable to understand but finally he stammered, "You say . . . you are sure?"

The jeweller misunderstood his surprise and he said dryly, "You can ask if any one will give you more, but

it is not worth more than fifteen thousand francs to me. Come back here if you cannot do better."

Monsieur Lantin was sure that he was going mad and that he must take his necklace and be alone to think. But when he was back in the street he told himself that he had been an imbecile not to take the jeweller at his word since he evidently did not know glass from diamonds.

He went into another shop not far down the Rue de la Paix, and as soon as the jeweller saw the string he exclaimed, "I know that necklace well. It was bought here."

Monsieur Lantin was even more disturbed.

"How much is it worth?" he asked.

"I sold it for twenty-five thousand francs, sir, and I will give you eighteen thousand for it if you will tell me how it came into your possession."

This time Monsieur Lantin was overcome by his astonishment.

"Examine it carefully, sir. I have always thought it an imitation."

"Will you give me your name?" the jeweller asked him.

"Certainly. My name is Lantin. I am in the Ministry of the Interior and I live at number 16, Rue des Martyrs."

The man opened his books, looked through them, and said, "This necklace was sent to Madame Lantin at that address on the twentieth of July, eighteen seventy-six."

The two men looked at each. The government clerk was senseless with surprise and the jeweller suspected a thief. The jeweller spoke first.

"Will you leave the necklace here for twenty-four hours? I will give you a receipt."

"Certainly," Monsieur Lantin stammered again. And he walked out of the shop folding the paper.

He crossed the street and walked up it again before he noticed that he was going the wrong way. He crossed the Seine and when he realized his mistake he came back to the Champs Elysées—all without one clear idea in his head. He tried to understand what had happened. His wife could not have bought the necklace herself. . . . Certainly not. . . . Then it must have been a gift. Whose gift . . . And why did he give it to her?

He stood quite still in the middle of the Champs Elysées. A horrible suspicion slipped into his mind. . . . Then all of the other jewels had been presents too! The earth shook under his feet. . . . The tree across the street was falling. He threw out his arms and fell unconscious. He came to himself in the pharmacy where some passers-by had carried him, and he asked to be taken home and shut himself up alone there.

He wept all day and bit a handkerchief to keep himself from screaming. Then he went to bed and slept heavily from sorrow and exhaustion.

A ray of sunlight woke him, and he rose wearily to dress for the Ministry. But he knew he could not work, and he sent a note to his chief. Then he remembered tnat he must go back to the jeweller's and his face turned purple from shame; but he could not leave the string of diamonds with the man, and he finally dressed and went out.

The day was fine and the sky was blue above the

radiant city. Men were strolling about with their hands in their pockets. Lantin looked at them.

"People who have money enough must always be happy. They can even forget their sorrows by travelling about and amusing themselves. I could do that if I were rich."

He began to realize that he was hungry and that he had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours, but his pockets were empty and he thought of the necklace again. Eighteen thousand francs was a great deal of money.

He turned into the Rue de la Paix, and walked up and down across from the jeweller's shop. Eighteen thousand francs was a great deal of money. Twenty times he almost went in, and mortification stopped him every time. But he was hungry and he had nothing in his pockets. He ran across the street and rushed into the shop without giving himself time to change his mind.

The jeweller smiled politely and offered him a chair. The clerks looked at him with knowing smiles in their eyes and on their lips.

"I have looked into the matter, sir," the man told him, "and I am willing to pay you the price I offered."

"I will take it," the poor government clerk stammered.

The jeweller took eighteen thousand-franc bills from a drawer, counted them, and offered them to Lantin, who signed a receipt and put them in his pocket with trembling hands. As he was going out he turned to the smiling shopkeeper and lowered his eyes.

"I have . . . I have some other jewels . . . that I inherited from the same person. Will you consider buying them?"

"Certainly, sir," the merchant said, bowing. One of the clerks went outside where he could laugh comfortably and another blew his nose violently.

"I will bring them," Lantin said, calmly and seriously, but with a very red face. He took a cab so that he could go for them quickly.

He was back in less than an hour without even stopping for breakfast. The proprietor and his clerks examined the pieces one by one and carefully considered their value although nearly all of them had been bought in the shop. Lantin argued about their valuations, lost his temper, insisted on seeing the records of the sales, and talked louder and louder as the figures grew larger.

The earrings were worth twenty thousand francs, the bracelets thirty-five thousand, the pins and rings and pendants sixteen thousand. A set of emeralds and sapphires was worth fourteen thousand and a gold chain with one beautiful diamond pendant was worth forty thousand—altogether, a hundred and ninety-six thousand francs.

"You see the advantage of putting all one's savings in precious stones," the jeweller said, laughing good-naturedly.

"They are as good an investment as any other," Lantin answered gravely. And he went away after he had arranged to have another jeweller's valuation the next day.

He looked up at the column in the Place Vendôme as if it were merely a greased pole that he wanted to climb —he could have played leap frog over the emperor's statue perched up there in the sky. He lunched at Voisin's and drank a twenty franc bottle of wine. Then he

took a carriage and drove through the Bois. He looked contemptuously at the private carriages and longed to call out to their owners, "I am rich too! I have two hundred thousand francs!"

He suddenly thought of the Ministry. He drove to it and walked boldly into his chief's office.

"I have come, sir, to offer you my resignation," he said. "I have inherited three hundred thousand francs."

Then he went out and shook hands with his old colleagues and told them what wonderful things he was going to do. But he dined alone at the Café Anglais. He happened to sit near a gentleman who seemed to him a person of distinction and he could not resist telling him that he had just inherited four hundred thousand francs.

For the first time in his life he was not bored at the theatre and after the play he went off with some girls.

He was married again six months later. His second wife was virtuous, but she was not charming. He was very unhappy with her.

VII

When Stendhal and Flaubert and Musset and Merimée and Maupassant had written, the shapely skeleton of Petronius had acquired every admirable quality that France could give it—every admirable quality that a body without a soul can have. The French story had been Gothic and romantic and it had become classic, which only means that it had been rude and that it had acquired grace and style and beauty and that it had realized the form that was part of its emotion. But when its emotion ceased to be Gothic, it did not become Doric even in Mérimée, because Mérimée had dignity without nobility, or in Rolland, because Rolland paid for his Gothic nobility with a Gothic lack of form. The Corinthian inhabitants of a Corinthian city had nothing more to do except to repeat Voltaire in an even suaver style and an even more beautifully modelled form and with the more composed negation of the heirs of Darwin and Renan, as Anatole France did in The Procurator of Judea and in Penguin Island—until he approached Dreyfus and his own day—or to become brilliantly and apocalyptically decadent as Remy de Gourmant did when he chronicled his night in the Luxembourg and as Arthur Rimbaud did when he chronicled his season in hell, or to become brilliantly and charmingly decadent as Jules Laforgue did when he wrote his legendary moralities

and created an art so conscious that it laughed at itself in its own mirror.

Learned levity is at least as old as Aristophanes and allegory is older than Æsop, but the Moralités Légendaires are almost certainly the first essays in the art of fiction that had not even the purpose of telling a tale. The symbolists had observed that life on the Earth is life on a whirling roulette, that for a hundred years life in France had been life on the rim of the roulette, and that the croupier was evidently not planning its progress as carefully as some people had supposed. Andersen had left his readers to turn his mirror up or down as they liked, but Laforgue played blind-man's-buff with his audience—blind-man's-buff in a formal garden adorned with statues of Apollo and all his muses, some of them done in the manner of Tanagra and some of them in the manner of Paris and some of them actually in the manner of Berlin—blind-man's-buff played with one character who is Harlequin and Pierrot and Hamlet become one complete gentleman and another who is Columbine and Salome and Camille become one lady—blind-man's-buff played to the music of David and Orpheus and Wagner and to the unwritten music of Debussy.

Laforgue never wrote one scene dedicated to Tragedy and then appeased the Spirit of Comedy and the tension of his audience with the dedication of his next scene—his presiding genius is an irresponsible goddess who has the wisdom and more than the learning of Pallas Athena, the placid chastity of Artemis, the charms of Aphrodite and the character of Jezebel, and who carries the attributes of Melpomene and Thalia in the same hand.

THE MIRACLE OF THE ROSES

BY JULES LAFORGUE

I

NEVER, never, did the little watering-place suspect, the little watering-place with its common municipal council elected by rapacious mountaineers—and not at all opéra-comique in spite of its members' costumes.

Why isn't everything opéra-comique? Why doesn't everything revolve to the measures of that English waltz *Myosotis,* which one heard that year at the Casino—a waltz so decently melancholy, so irreparably last, last beautiful days! If I could only, with one word, intoxicate you with the spirit of that waltz before I allow you to enter this story!

O gloves eternally rejuvenated by benzine! O melancholy coming and going of these existences! O forgivable appearances of happiness! O beauties who will age in black lace and pass into the chimney-corner without ever understanding the behaviour of the strong, gay sons they will bring into the world with so chaste a melancholy!

Little town, little town of my heart.

Invalids no longer walk round and round the springs, holding their carefully graduated goblets. Now, baths are the thing—water at twenty-five degrees—then the stroll, and then the siesta. And it is for the neurotic, for the ladies, for the most feminine ladies.

One sees them wandering about, these fair neurotics, trailing a foot which will never again waltz to the delicate and measured air of *Myosotis,* or driven in little carriages hooded with weary leather. One sees them suddenly leaving their seats during the Casino's concerts, and one hears strange sounds of involuntary swallowing. One sees them turn quickly back from their promenades, holding their hands to necks that seem to have received the blows of some sorry jester. One meets them at the edge of the wood, their faces twitching, strewing bits of torn letters in the ancient gutters. These are the neurotics, the children of too brilliant a century, and they are everywhere.

The kindly sun, friend of snakes, of cemeteries, and of wax dolls, also draws a few consumptives there—slow of step, but dear to the dilettanti.

They played in the Casino, in other days (O brilliant and irresponsible days that my fool's heart weeps for!) Since they no longer play (O shade of Prince Canio, always flanked by your faithful Leporello, what unknown grave-digger is tending you?) the rooms are deserted except by their useless but decorative guardians. The room where one reads the papers is always full at mail time, but the neurotics soon empty it with those sounds of involuntary swallowing that make the Temps fall from one's hands. The old gaming-room has only Dutch spinning-tops, jockey-billiards, show-cases of prizes for childish lotteries, and tables for chess and checkers. Another room shelters a piano with a trailing cover left from other days—O incurably romantic ballades of Chopin, you have laid away still another generation, while the girl who plays you this morning

loves, believes that love was not known before the arrival of her distinguished and matchless heart, and pities you, O ballades, for your exile in misunderstanding. Today, no one raises the drapery with faded flowers that covers this piano of other days, but the breezes of beautiful evenings play strange chance harmonies among the crystal stalactites of the chandelier which once illuminated so many well-nourished shoulders, dancing to the guilty airs of Offenbach.

From the terrace of this guilty Casino of other days, one sees a thick and healthy grass tennis-court, where the young—truly modern, muscular, fresh from their showers, and responsible to History—exercise their animal spirits, arms bare, bodies high, and accountable to the free and erudite Young Girls who limp about elegantly in their flat shoes, holding up their heads to the fresh air and to Man (instead of cultivating their immortal souls and thinking of death, which is the natural state of Christians when they are ill.)

Beyond this greensward of truly modern youth are the first little hills, and the Greek chapel with gilded cupolas to whose vaults are relegated all that dies of the princely family of Stourdza.

And farther yet, the Villa K——, where pouts a fallen and unlettered Catholic queen in whose visitors' book fewer and fewer people inscribe themselves, and who still thinks that her presence draws to the neighbourhood all the visitors it once did.

And then more hills, sites for touched-up chromos of romantic towers, and for cottages that exist to be sketched.

And above this foolish little town and its circle of

hills, the eternal sky, which puts all these ephemeral women into mourning. They never go out without putting the shadow of a frivolous parasol between themselves and God.

The committee on entertainment is doing well! Venetian nights, balloon ascensions (the balloonist is always called Karl Securius), children's merry-go-rounds, séances of spiritualism and of anti-spiritualism, all to the sound of the valiant little orchestra which nothing in the world could prevent from going to the Springs at half-past seven every morning to play the opening choral of the day. Then in the afternoon under the acacias of the Promenade (O soli of the little harpist who dresses himself in black, blanches his face with powder, and hopes to be snatched away by some exotic invalid whose soul trembles like his harp!) Then in the evening, under the electric light (O march from Aida on the cornet, ascending to the indubitable and chimerical stars!)

There then, precisely, is the luxurious spa. There it is like a distinguished bee-hive at the end of its valley. Every one of these wandering couples is rich with a past, spent no one knows where. And no proletarians are visible—only the lieutenants of luxury, grooms, coachmen, cooks all in white on door-steps in the evening, drivers of donkeys and drivers of cows that give milk for the consumptives. And all the languages and all the head-dresses that beautify civilization.

In the twilight, still to music, one yawns a little. One raises one's eyes and sees this eternal circle of well-kept little hills, and these strollers who go round and round with pale, sharp smiles, and one has to distraction the

feeling of a luxurious prison among green meadows—that all the invalids are ill of romance and of the past, and that they have been banished here from the serious capitals where Progress laboriously complicates itself.

One supped on the terrace every evening. Not far away was the table of Princess T—— (a large brunette, badly made and over-made) who thought that she was clever (what an error!) among the intimates who thought it as much as she did (error, error!) I watched the fountain leap and aspire diabolically towards the star of Venus which was arising above the horizon. The echoes of the valley were waked by rockets like more fountains, but still more like the stars—stars as indubitable and chimerical to this fountain and to these rockets as to the march from Aida, fulminating nostalgically from the thoughtful valves of this cornet-à-piston. They were ineffable as anything, those evenings. You who were there and who had not drawn to yourselves your still unknown betrothed, as loving it draws the thunderbolt, need search no more; for she whom you will find in a little while will be only another.

O little town, you knew my only passions, but they are complete now. Since she (She) died, I scarcely ever come back. It is not sentimentality, though sentimentality is not what a futile race thinks, but something which has no name in any language—like the voice of blood.

II

It was Corpus Christi Day.

Since early morning the old bells had been ringing.

But the heavenly bells contrasted too much with certain niggardly rivalries. There was going to be a procession. The great square was the most important station, and every year in this square the Hôtel d' Angleterre and the Hôtel de France renewed the painful rivalries of Waterloo and of the Grand Prix in the stage-settings of their altars.

Public opinion (*vox populi, vox dei*) gave the palm again to the Hôtel d'Angleterre.

And, in fact, besides the classic arrangement of carpet which covered the steps and the four holy pictures and the table d'hôte flower-stands and candelabra ablaze in the June sunlight, this lair of Albion's sons exhibited a Saint Theresa in an excavation among the palms. The hysterical rococo polychrome of the town's patroness fascinated the eye. The Hôtel de France had been able to think of nothing better than excelling its floral orgy of the year before.

On the third corner of the great square, the palace of the Duchess H—— intervened the superior serenity of its own altar—for the safeguarding of elegance and the edification of the masses. Among peonies and peacock's feathers and pink candles, and between a Holy Family by Tiepolo and a Magdalen attributed to Lucas Cranach, three good-wishes-for-the-day supported the arms of the noble lady, embroidered on a shield of amaranth plush.

No matter, there was only one voice to proclaim the victory of England—but a mere victory of tinsel and heathenish allurements that would be dearly paid for in a better world.

Whereas the altar of the Hôtel de France, without entering into the significance of its charming sheaves of

lilies (which do not spin) was to be the theatre of a more æsthetic second edition of the Miracle of the Roses.

Yes, the legendary Miracle of the Roses!

At least to the eyes of her who was its heroine, a touching and typical creature, snatched away too early from the affection of her family and the dilettantism of her friends.

In the great square where the Hôtel d'Angleterre and the Hôtel de France are to renew the painful rivalries of Waterloo and of the Grand Prix, and which is to be the most important station of the feast of Corpus Christi, groups of visitors, brilliantly in the fashion (instead of cultivating their immortal souls, etc.) are already standing about in the same sun with groups of simple natives.

The square is a fine sight in the hot June sun, but a being of the twilight now steps upon the stage.

"Are you comfortable here, Ruth?"

"Yes, Patrick."

Under the peristyle of the hotel's entrance, the young invalid is decently stretched out in her chaise-longue. Her brother Patrick wraps her in rugs and the gold-laced porter places a screen on her left with a slapped obsequiousness.

Patrick seats himself beside his sister's couch. He holds her handkerchief, transparent as a perfume, her box of orange cachou, her fan (a fan, O ironic and sad caprice of the last hour!) her flask of real musk (the last consolation of the dying). He holds these sad properties of his sister's rôle, he always holds them, always, eternally, at the service of every changing expres-

sion—already reinitiated in the original heights out there beyond life (life, that regimen of nonentity). At this moment, she is meditating on those shadows of hands with phalanges sadly like mother of pearl—hers.

Ruth has never been married or betrothed, and the ring-finger of that left hand with the phalanges sadly like mother of pearl bears a wedding-ring, very slender, certainly. Still some mystery.

Ideal maiden on her death-bed, too soon snatched away from the affection of her family and the dilettantism of her friends, in her grey gown with its long straight folds, her fur cape, and her high lace collar held by a thin gold fleur-de-lis. Hair of red amber massed on her forehead and elaborately braided in two coils on her fair neck, in the fashion of Julia Mammea. Bewildered eyes, virtuous but untamed. A greedy little mouth—though bloodless. An air too late, adorable too late. Adorable too late, for how can this waxen tint ever redden again from jealously?

She speaks, doubtless to hear herself say something at least once more.

"Ah, Patrick, the noise of that falling water will kill me."

There is a cascade, in fact, at the side of the hotel.

"Come now, Ruth, don't give yourself ideas."

To change her mood, she fumbles among the insipid tea-roses (the doctor had forbidden her blood-red roses) scattered on her black and white checker-board rug. Then she ended, as she always ended, but with a look so delicately martyred that it dispelled every suspicion of pose.

"Weak, Patrick, weak as an emptied sachet. . . ."

They are brother and sister, but of different (very different) mothers. He is four years the younger, a youth admirable as the fir-trees of his country. They have been living in a retired pavilion of the hotel for two months.

"Weak, Patrick, weak as an emptied sachet. . . ."

Too pure, indeed, to live, too nervous to keep body and soul together. Too much like diamond to let herself be scratched by existence, the inviolable Ruth empties herself like a sachet from winter resort to winter resort, always following the sun, friend of cemeteries, of dissolutions, and of virgin wax dolls.

They were in India last year, at Darjeeling, and there the condiment of hallucinations was added to her tuberculosis. Though already withdrawn from the conflict of this cruel blood-thirsty world, she found herself the distractedly unwilling inspiration and the one witness of a strange suicide in a moonlit garden. And since that night she thinks that she sees the red and passionate blood of the strange suicide in the fine blood of her own lungs and she becomes delirious from this blood of sharp, concise things.

Consumptive, delirious, whichever may be at the bottom of all this romancing, the young lady is not here for long, as they allow themselves to whisper below stairs and in the offices. (That floor is pitiless.)

As in a dream which interrupts for a season or two his own travels and his own development into hero, the good Patrick follows with a fatalist's eye the dying, dying colours of the hectic spots on his sister's cheeks, and the crescents of blood on her handkerchiefs. He exists only to lean over her eyes, sometimes acute as those

of wild birds on the Atlantic, sometimes in a fog dark as tar, to lean over the veins of her temples, blue as flashes of heat lightning, to serve her at table, to take her walking, to bring her a bouquet of marigolds every morning, to show her pictures, to play little Norwegian things from an album of Kjerulf's for her, to read to her in a perennially eager voice.

At this moment, Patrick is reading Seraphita, to help his sister forget the great staring creatures while she waits for the procession.

"Like a white dove, a soul will rest for an instant on this body. . . ."

"It is easy to interpret," Ruth said. "It belongs decidedly to the low seraphic, that effort. It smells of Geneva, where it was written. And this messenger of light with a sword and a helmet! Poor, poor Seraphita! No, this Balzac with the neck of a bull could never have been your brother."

And Ruth, sublimely reserved, begins again to fumble with one hand among the tea-roses scattered over the black and white checker-board of her rug. The other hand plays with a strange enamelled medallion that seems to padlock her sexless breast with its esoterism.

Strange, strange, indeed, this enamelled medallion that she caresses on her sexless breast. It is an enamel in relief, and of a barbaric future taste—the enormous and splendid eye of a peacock's tail under a human eye-lid, and encircled by bloodless uncut stones. One May afternoon in the Bois, a poor devil whom Ruth had been finding in her path for a long time rushed from the shrubbery, followed her carriage, and threw the medallion at her feet. He said to her in a perfectly natural

voice, "For you only, and the day when you lay it away I will retire from life." A gentleman fainted as she entered a drawing-room one evening. When he recovered, this gentleman stammered that he did not faint because of her, but because of the enamelled medallion she wore on her breast. He begged her to let him have it for his collection. Ruth told him why she was obliged to refuse, and described the poor madman as well as she could. The collector searched for him, failed to find him, and went into a decline. He came to Ruth's house, and there he surrendered to the vastness of nature his poor soul which loved things that are made.

That is the great secret. This Ruth, this charming dying girl, by an incomprehensible fatality, spends her life spreading suicide on her way to the cross.

Ruth operated at Biarritz before she came to sadden the little watering-place, and despite her horror of blood she went to see a bull-fight at Saint Sebastian.

Ruth and her imperturbable brother found themselves in the governor's box above the bulls' entrance. Ruth was ecstatic in her loose gown of tea-coloured etamine, without folds or flounces—hastily made, with the hurried get-it-done-anyhow of a shroud, in order not to affront the dissolution beyond fashions which might at any moment overtake her who was to wear it.

The bestial blood which flowed there, slowly drunk by the sand of the arena, did take the place of her usual nightmare.

Decently, without a quickening of the heart, she had already exulted over six jades disembowelled, four bulls gashed and run through at last, and two wounded banderilleros thrown headlong. She always held the

governor's arm when the whole circus suggested by a thousand waving handkerchiefs that he should wave his own handkerchief and stop the massacring of picadors and horses.

"Not yet, *signor presidente,* the next engagement will be the most beautiful. . . ."

At the fifth bull, a volley of jeers broke over the weak *signor presidente.* Two horses in their death agony lay in each others' embrace waiting to be dispatched. Two others were dragged away losing masses of bowels. Finally, at a signal, the heavy picadors dressed in yellow had drawn back, leaving the bull facing the banderillero waiting with his beribboned javelins behind him. He was bleeding, the poor bull, from the scratches that had been only too successfully placed. He bounded, then turned, and went to smell the limp masses of the two wounded horses and to touch them with his small horns. He sat down in front of them like a brotherly sentinel and laid his forehead against them as if he were trying to understand. In vain the banderillero called him, teased him, and threw his bonnet with its bunches of black silk grapes at his feet. The bull went on trying to understand, digging the sand with an angry hoof, bewildered by this field of brilliant colours and clamouring people where he could only tear floating red rags and blindfolded horses.

A capador jumped over the wall and threw a collapsed leather bottle in his face. The brilliantly coloured spectators applauded.

And then, suddenly, before these twenty thousand fans waving under the splendid sky in a great silence of waiting, this beast stretched his neck unmistakably towards

Ruth, as if she alone were the cause of all this cruelty. So far from his native pastures, he began to utter cries so superhumanly miserable (so *genial,* to tell it all) that there was one of those moments of general shock in which new religions are founded. Fainting and delirious, the beautiful and inhuman lady of the presidential box was carried out.

And Ruth took up again her torn refrain.

"Blood, blood . . . there, on the grass . . . all the perfumes of Araby. . . ."

Since Ruth had been there, the slaughter of bulls and horses had to end very strangely that day. This *signor presidente* who saw our young and symbolical heroine for the first time, this singular being with his yellow fever face and his gold spectacles, this creole who was undisturbed and somnolent before the jeers of the whole circus, killed himself that very evening. He left some little souvenirs of consular exiles in the colonies for Ruth, and an enigmatical and noble letter which Patrick was happily able to intercept—besides refusing to catch the significance of this epidemic of bizarre scenes.

And who ever did catch it, if not He who reigns in heaven?

III

When the bells had caught their breath, they struck one more blow on the bosom of unreasoning nature—which does not know whether it is more "natural" or "naturalized," but which does not join the two ends any the less for that.

The procession of Him who reigns in heaven ap-

proached. There was a flourish of trumpets, and it appeared.

First came two choir boys in yellow, carrying the censer and the tall cross of old silver—both with the bored air of tradition.

Then, stamping like a flock of sheep, a boys' school, two by two, dressed in their Sunday best by poor mamas who had surpassed themselves. They all held the book of canticles open under their hats and dragged the litany towards the round acacias of the Promenade. The first two, dressed like offsprings of more consequential citizens, hoisted the worn silk banner and two less important little boys held its tassels. At a certain moment, a father left the hedge of spectators, and vigorously rearranged the plastered parting of his touching Elliacin with his shaving-brush and an air that said, "I belong to the parish." The last four boys of this flock, tall and loutish in their black first communion suits, gave their shoulders to the shafts of a Pietà in the style of the Rue Saint Sulpice. Four choristers in red hats, extravagantly gloved and brilliantly sashed, marshalled the school's procession, coming and going with their hands on their hips like serjeants-at-arms.

Then came some little girls, looking like barley-sugar angels in white frocks and blue sashes, their curls wreathed with lilies of the valley, and their bare arms carrying baskets of petals.

Then a boarding-school, dowdily out of uniform, singing a canticle slightly off the key.

Then a multitude of white gowned winners of the Rose, some congregation of Children of Mary, wreathed, gloved, exceedingly genteel, carrying a banner here and

there, and here and there a plaster statue—parochial relics of a vague sanctity.

Then, still in white, an omnibus filled with first communicants veiled in long folds, eyes lowered, hands touching in a pious point, murmuring in unison things learned by heart (Ah! when the heart is there . . .)

Then, in solid formation, preceded by the whole fire-brigade, the choral society advanced, a choral society of smoked and dried peasants, in frock-coats and top hats—brasses dented in homeward journeys from wedding dances, clarinets in the fashion of Jocrisse at the Fair, drums with blue skins, and dog-eared music fastened to the instruments. At the moment, they were executing the wedding march from Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream.

Still four favoured little girls, with their baskets of rose petals. And at last, its four staves held by four weighty gentlemen, the gold-fringed canopy sheltering the ecclesiastic who was to officiate. Pompous to behold, but prostrated within, he held out to the faithful along the way the legendary monstrance of the Most Holy Sacrament.

And the canopy halted before the altar of the Hôtel de France.

O hushed step of edifying unction, silence in the full light of day, bell sounding shrill and sacred as during mass at the moment of the elevation, censer swinging! This Holy Sacrament was evidently the climax of the procession.

The gentlemen had uncovered, ladies knelt on the edge of the pavement. No elegant sceptic objected.

O silence in the full light of day, bell sounding shrill

and sacred as during mass at the moment of the elevation, censers raised in clouds of homage! The whole world was pious.

But for Ruth, unfortunate and symbolical heroine whom I have created, this silence irresistibly persuading one to shriek, this bell shrill and implacable as the Last Judgment, are they not the attributes of the desolation of desolations in those unrighteous valleys beyond the grave where the Suicide wanders, the Suicide who loved too much, the Suicide who can not speak, with the wound in his forehead? . . .

She unclasps her feverishly devout hands, and, hanging on her brother's arm, she begins to moan from the very end of her somnambulist legs, "Blood, blood, there on the grass! . . . All the perfumes of Araby . . . O Patrick, if I only knew why . . . I of all others, in this vast world where our sex is in the majority?"

Patrick could have cried to her at last and before the world, "You began!" But no, he caresses her hands, he gently gives her the flask of musk, and he waits without scandal, although he feels her fainting.

The priest who bears the Holy Sacrament turns visibly towards the elegant young invalid for a moment, and favours her with a remote movement of his consecrated lips.

And, at the same moment, a little girl came out of the ranks, a little girl urged on by a beaming, tingling, young man. Scarlet with shame as if she were obeying some dreadful order, she climbs the steps and comes to scatter all the rose-coloured roses in her basket around the chaise-longue of the fainting girl. (The child just missed falling as she went down.)

There are moments in this life that are absolutely heart-rending, heart-rending for all classes of society. This was not one of them, but there are such moments.

The procession began its march again. The Holy Sacrament went to thurify the Hôtel d'Angleterre's Saint Theresa of hysterical rococo polychrome, before thurifying in its turn the coat of arms of the Duchess H——. The canticles had begun again at the head, and the tail of the procession was marching past.

It passed, the tail of the procession. First, the household of the fallen queen. Then, in two files, a whole senate of citizens, hat in hand, with the indelible stigmata of their callings—apoplectic butchers and pale pastry-cooks. Then some peasants, bent, wrinkled, skulls poorly covered, but caps in their hands, two or three on crutches, two or three walking alone and reciting their prayers. Then the sisters of charity, hands in their big sleeves, head-dresses with wings quivering like a Holy Ghost monstrously starched by a religion that had taken wing on its own ceremonies. Then a few ladies with parasols, and some servant-girls. Then some peasant women with shawls of other days and sun-burnt goitres. At long intervals, a man or a woman dropped off his beads aloud, and his neighbours murmured the responses.

The Corpus Christi Day procession ended by ending, stupidly chopped off with a timid group of maid-servants.

And the general public poured after it, in the dust and the trampled petals, towards their *déjeuners à la carte.*

In the meantime, while they were taking down the altar . . .

Farewell baskets, vintage time is over! . . .

Ruth revives, she looks, she exults, one hand on the enamelled medallion which locks her sexless breast, the other pointing around her, "O Patrick, Patrick! Look at the roses in the square! No more blood, but the roses of a blood redeemed forever! O give me one of them to touch. . . ."

"It is true!" Patrick said, without thinking about it, instinctively tender, wholly his sister's. Blood changed into roses indeed!

"Then he is saved, Patrick?"

"He is saved."

She fills her hands with petals and sobs noiselessly.

"O, the poor creature! Now I will not have to bother myself about his condition."

And she ends in a violent cough which has to be watered with the eternal syrup of benzoin.

And actually, thanks to the rose-coloured roses scattered at such a happy moment by a nameless little girl, Ruth was exorcised of her hallucinations, and from that day she could give herself entirely to the duties of her consumption, whose record she began again with a pen dipped in a blue-flowered ink-well manufactured at Delft.

Useless to say she never knew that the very evening of this same Corpus Christi Day, the brother of the little girl with the basket of miraculous roses killed himself for her sake in a hotel room, with no witness of the state of his poor heart except Him who reigns in heaven.

But the Miracle of the Roses was accomplished in all the glory of blood and of roses! Hallelujah!

VIII

THE story of the miracle that was wrought during the procession of Him who reigns in heaven is certainly not very much like the story whose stimulating last phrase reveals Pontius Pilate's entire inability to remember a certain Jew called Jesus when a noble Roman lover of Saint Mary Magdalene's was reminiscing about the seductive damsel who had enlivened the Judean exile he shared with the procurator. But the point of view in both stories is the point of view which knows that no rational person should excite himself over the vagaries of a roulette and its unconcerned croupier, and the difference is only the difference of one particularly disjunctive generation and of one temperament that is an echo of the eighteenth century and another that is a prophecy of the twentieth century. Osbert Sitwell is still decorating limping Henry James stories with the interjections and the curves and almost the very phrases of Laforgue—"Every morning at twelve o'clock, to the droning snort of a brass band, Mr. Dearborn, in white flannel trousers (oh, how long ago was that day in the garden of Walter Pater . . . !) would descend the steps to the sugar-pink terrace"—and Aldous Huxley and Ronald Firbank and some other less applauded young Georgians are still demonstrating the unfortunate effect French influence can have on young English writers. But the Georgians do not turn symbolist poetry into purple and gold prose, and they are too clever to provide Laforgue with ex post

facto originals for his parodies as Oscar Wilde did when he wrote his Salome, and as Mallarmé did when he wrote the nebular verses Laforgue might have been remembering when he wrote the story of the morning when the god Pan pursued the nymph Syrinx and invented the flute with seven reeds—as William Shakespeare's well-known good sense would have kept him from doing if he had enjoyed the advantage of knowing Laforgue's unfortunate Prince Hamlet, who was already occupied with his Unconscious forty years ago.

The English writers of the celebrated eighteen nineties learned from Laforgue and from the other French symbolists that a story has the right to be a work of art, just as the English painters learned from the French impressionists that a picture has the right not to be an illustration. They had their idea, but not much besides except a certain fragile cleverness and a conviction that an admirable prose style would result from repeating the adjective strange before the names of all the colours and all the gems and all the vices. So far as literature is concerned they lived and wrote and went mad and died chiefly to assist at Henry James's escape from the England of Tennyson and Browning and Carlyle and George Eliot to which he had fled from the America of Longfellow and Emerson and Hawthorne. Even after Darwin and Strauss had split the century in half, Longfellow and Tennyson went on writing limpid numbers to announce that the grave is not our goal and Browning went on acquiring his more distinguished reputation by announcing the same thing in lines that give a sensitive reader the sensation of riding on a train with one flat wheel and Charles Dickens went on

announcing the same thing in prose that was displeasing to the ladies of Cranford. Henry James was not likely to find himself in the literary company of the ignorant and the innocent, but he did find himself in the company of a generation of writers who shared every characteristic of the pious except their capacity for belief, who did not have the courage of their imposed atheism, and who needed only a few dogmas to make them happy wesleyans instead of such inadequate stoics as George Eliot and Thomas Hardy—stoics who cried out their anguish in stories when they stumbled over life and bruised the souls they could not forget.

Henry James was a better stoic than Thomas Hardy, and as good an epicurean as Anatole France—an epicurean so chaste that he might have been conceived by Walter Pater—but he was spared the necessity of a philosophy of life by being one of those artists for whom this world is a model as satisfactory as another, and who look at their model only between brush-strokes. The reason he chose to look at London between brush-strokes instead of at Boston was doubtless the reason that made his writing his philosophy of life—even in the inexplicable church of his fathers, which builds temples and sings hymns to proclaim that it believes nothing, youth is doubtless taught that the kingdom of heaven is within it, but Henry James was taught that Europe was the great good place and he was taken to behold its glory with his own carefully prepared eyes. He did not have what can be called a continental nature, and the Europe before whose wonderful distinction he was never able to take more than one knee from the ground was England—the England of eighteen hundred and

sixty-nine, which had to its credit exactly ten novels and not one story and which had no writer of fictions except George Meredith whom he should have been able to find admirable. But apparently he could never learn very much from books—certainly he learned far less from Turgenev than he and George Moore believed that he learned, and certainly he could not have learned anything very useful from Balzac. What he did get from Europe was his essential quality.

Henry James was never a normal man—he was not even a normal genius, and if he had lived in Boston and dined with Miss Ellen Emerson and Miss Amy Lowell instead of living in Rye and dining with Miss Rhoda Broughton and Mrs. Humphry Ward, he would undoubtedly have produced an extremely unusual kind of rose. But when he decided to live without roots and to breathe in culture and fine recognitions instead of air, he produced those beautiful flowers which are certainly not roses and which are certainly not orchids. He would hardly have found a theatrical glory like Blanche Adney in America or a literary glory like Clare Vawdrey or such a precious antithesis for him as the dazzling Lord Mellifont—but neither could he have found more than a bare hint for them in England and neither could Praxitiles have found more than a hint for his Aphrodite in Phryne. Henry James's characters have not much more relation to the flat realities of any country than the resilient phrases they exchange with each other or the exquisite perceptions that are their real conversation. Nature has intimated only by producing Henry James that she could produce Nanda Brookenhams and Milly Theales and Julia Brides if she liked, and only by pro-

ducing George Meredith that she could produce Chloes and Diana Warwicks and Clara Middletons instead of ourselves.

Henry James and George Meredith wrote about human beings so transcendental that a new prose naturally evolved from the delicacy of their emotions and of their relations. Meredith's prose is difficult because he knew a great deal and thought a great deal and he never gave up a name or an idea merely because he might have a reader who had never heard the name or who could not understand the idea, and because his exuberant figures of speech trouble some of his readers as seriously as the Comic Spirit does. Henry James did compare Maggie Verver's feeling about her husband's feeling for her stepmother to a porcelain pagoda, and he did say that Julia Bride's consciousness had become, by an extraordinary turn, a music-box in which, its lid well down, the most remarkable tunes were sounding; but there is nothing mysterious about pagodas and music-boxes, and his taste in what are called literary allusions is never more recondite than Oliver Twist and the Artful Dodger or Manfred and Medusa—and usually not more than one of those strains on his readers' erudition in a story. Even in The Spoils of Poynton, the treasured brasses Louis Quinze might have thumbed, the Venetian velvets and the splendidly toned tapestries that are the story's donnée are so lightly mentioned that a reader who has never sat on anything more Corinthian than a Windsor chair need not be embarrassed by them. The comprehension of Henry James would seem to be a matter of observing his commas and of a willingness to read every word on fifty pages instead of half the words on a hun-

dred pages as most readers so curiously prefer to do. Only in the magnificent freedom of the English language could such a mind have found an expression that is impossible in those strait-jacket tongues which make an objective pronoun's presence just before its verb obligatory or a subject's arrival before its predicate nothing more original than a grammatical error. The peculiarities which are also the charm of his style came only from his beautiful deference towards his characters and his ideas and his very words—even the poor tarnished words that he picked up in the tongs of inverted commas—and from his pleasant habit of taking his readers with him on his long journey towards the point of his sentence instead of giving them merely the point. And the form of his stories came from his habit of taking his readers with him on his long journey towards the point of his case. His prose and his form—his whole style—came from the æsthetic moral sense which was only the perfection of good manners, and which was the austere New England soul he gave to the story and to the novel.

Henry James's form is admirable and it is intense, particularly in the carefully set and played scenes which are distinctively his own, and his emotion—which is always his spirit—is admirable and intense, but his emotion and his people and his prose are always keyed at something so much higher than concert pitch that his stories are always manifestly finely fashioned works of art and his unconcealed art is easy to imitate. No other writer of English has ever suffered such faithful psychological and verbal imitation, and only Joseph Conrad has ever had a more unfortunate effect on the ideas and the prose of his more immediate disciples than Henry James

has had on the ideas and the prose of Ethel Sidgwick and Edith Wharton and Anne Douglas Sedgwick and the whole host of their comrades. Joseph Conrad himself was the only one of the first generation of his disciples who survived the fascination of Henry James's commas and who lived to ruin, in his turn, all the William McFees and Brett Youngs who are giving up the methods that were at least their own methods to follow him back to the primitive idea that a scrupulous novelist can not know anything he has not seen unless his neighbour has seen it—a return which carried something of Henry James's psychology and something of his verbal informality and something less of his moral problem with it. Conrad's moral problems are as simple and as little subtle as the men and the code of the sea and his stories are entirely unslavic in having a respectable moral character instead of a soul, but if his roundabout voyages in search of the threads that he was obliged to find outside his heroes' heads do not often let his readers off with anything brief enough to be called a short story, an art even less concealed than whatever art there may be in the acting at the Comédie Française gave him a multitude of disciples whose stories are scattered through all the periodicals and all the anthologies.

Conrad described his own method with uncommon nicety when he described the method of his man Marlow— "The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only

as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of those misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine." Conrad's method, like his subjects, undoubtedly grew out of the twenty years when he was following the sea, and out of that lack of formal education which has caused so many men to work out their problems by a tedious arithmetic when the rest of the world has learned to work them out quite simply by geometry. But he never allowed his readers any more relief from his problems of moral conduct than Euclid allowed his readers from his problems of angles and triangles, and he never allowed them the relief of a style that indulgently suggests pleasant little excursions of memory and of association. One of the peculiar things that may be learned in a public library is one result of his subjects and of his style—simple souls who would never reach Henry James's or George Meredith's first full stop read his stories with the same appetite they have for Clark Russell and with no idea that people who find The Golden Bowl and The Egoist only agreeably stimulating often emerge from Heart of Darkness and The End of the Tether with the aching sensation of having burrowed their way to the end of Kurtz and the end of Captain Whalley through several hundred pages of solid stone.

All the stories that Conrad wrote and all the stories that Henry James wrote are as visibly arranged, in their more occult fashion, as The Necklace and The Taking of the Redoubt—their attitude towards their art is still the French attitude, and their attitude towards their diverse moral problems is as entirely and as admirably worldly as Mérimée's. Russians and Americans are, I

suppose, the only nations that still have souls, since they are the only nations that still have even mistaken ideals, and Henry James got everything there was to be gotten from being an American by going off to be an American in England. But Conrad seems to have gotten so little from being a Slav—so little except honour even by going off to be a Slav in England—that he might almost as well have been the elderly French naval lieutenant who took a lenient view of Lord Jim's flight from the Patna, who had observed that men are born cowards and who had also observed that habit, necessity, and the eye and the example of other men usually help them to put a fairly good face on the matter. The difference between being born a Slav in Poland and a Slav in Russia must be at least as wide as the difference between being born an Anglo-Saxon in America and an Anglo-Saxon in England—as wide as the difference between Paderewski and Stravinski and between Quo Vadis and War and Peace if it is as wide as the difference between Youth and The Darling and between Falk and The Kiss.

But we know Conrad, and unless we read Russian we do not know whether we know Chekhov or not—Conrad's phrases are obviously not always quite English translations of his ideas, but they are doubtless more faithful to his mind than the phrases of Chekhov's extravagantly praised translator can be to his mind. The awkward prose of the introductions and of the biographical notice in the letters and of her other translations leaves one the privilege of believing that Chekhov's Russian is not necessarily Constance Garnett's English, and of believing with Croce that a mind which could conceive The Darling and which could create its form

could find words to express his conception. Chekhov always began at the beginning—and not at a beginning ingeniously near the end. He wrote down the name of the man he was going to describe and his exact social condition and his precise situation at that moment. He did not walk cautiously and a little lumberingly between nightingale's eggs, as Henry James did, and he did not affect an ignorance of the way his creature chose to spell his name, as Joseph Conrad did, or of what was going on inside his creature's head. He walked in and out of his hero's thoughts, in and out of his life, and in and out of the lives of the men and women who affected his life. He wrote stories that have no rhetoric of phrase or of emotion, that are alive with the Comic Spirit but that have no phrases which leap away from the other phrases—stories that have no interest in Reversals and Recognitions and no unity except the unity of their hero's character. He did not judge his fellow mortals as harshly as their creator is commonly supposed to judge them, he did not judge the President of the Immortals harshly, he did not expect his hero's end to astonish a rational reader and he did not hurry it into one sentence as if the curtain might come down in another minute and leave it untold forever.

And when he had written a story like The Darling, it unwinds as smoothly as an evenly wrapped ball of string and he had created a character who makes it unnecessary that any writer should ever again give himself the trouble of describing what is called a feminine woman.

THE PRIVATE LIFE[1]

BY HENRY JAMES

I

We talked of London face to face with a great bristling primeval glacier. The hour and the scene were one of those impressions that make up a little in Switzerland for the modern indignity of travel—the promiscuities and vulgarities, the station and the hotel, the gregarious patience, the struggle for a scrappy attention, the reduction to a numbered state. The high valley was pink with the mountain rose, the cool air as fresh as if the world were young. There was a faint flush of afternoon on undiminished snows, and the fraternizing tinkle of the unseen cattle came to us with a cropped and sun-warmed odour. The balconied inn stood on the very neck of the sweetest pass in the Oberland, and for a week we had had company and weather. This was felt to be great luck, for one would have made up for the other had either been bad.

The weather certainly would have made up for the company; but it wasn't subjected to this tax, for we had by a happy chance the fleur des pois: Lord and Lady Mellifont, Clare Vawdrey, the greatest (in the opinion of many) of our literary glories, and Blanche Adney, the greatest (in the opinion of all) of our theatrical. I mention these first because they were just the people

[1] From The Private Life by Henry James. Harper and Brothers, New York, N. Y.

whom in London, at the time, people tried to "get." People endeavoured to "book" them six weeks ahead, yet on this occasion we had come in for them, we had all come in for each other, without the least wire-pulling. A turn of the game had pitched us together the last of August, and we recognized our luck by remaining so, under protection of the barometer. When the golden days were over—that would come soon enough—we should wind down opposite sides of the pass and disappear over the crest of surrounding heights. We were of the same general communion, chalk-marked for recognition by signs from the same alphabet. We met, in London, with irregular frequency; we were more or less governed by the laws and the language, the traditions and the shibboleths of the same dense social state. I I think all of us, even the ladies, "did" something, though we pretended we didn't when it was mentioned. Such things aren't mentioned indeed in London, but it was our innocent pleasure to be different here. There had to be some way to show the difference, inasmuch as we were under the impression that this was our annual holiday. We felt at any rate that the conditions were more human than in London, or at least that we ourselves were. We were frank about this, we talked about it: it was what we were talking about as we looked at the flushing glacier, just as some one called attention to the prolonged absence of Lord Mellifont and Mrs. Adney. We were seated on the terrace of the inn, where there were benches and little tables, and those of us most bent on showing with what a rush we had returned to nature were, in the queer Germanic fashion, having coffee before meat.

The remark about the absence of our two companions was not taken up, not even by Lady Mellifont, not even by little Adney, the fond composer; for it had been dropped only in the briefest intermission of Clare Vawdrey's talk. (This celebrity was "Clarence" only on the title-page.) It was just that revelation of our being after all human that was his theme. He asked the company whether, candidly, every one hadn't been tempted to say to every one else: "I had no idea you were really so nice." I had had, for my part, an idea that *he* was, and even a good deal nicer, but that was too complicated to go into then; besides it's exactly my story. There was a general understanding among us that when Vawdrey talked we should be silent, and not, oddly enough, because he at all expected it. He didn't, for of all copious talkers he was the most undesigning, the least greedy and professional. It was rather the religion of the host, of the hostess, that prevailed among us; it was their own idea, but they always looked for a listening circle when the great novelist dined with them. On the occasion I allude to there was probably no one present with whom in London he hadn't dined, and we felt the force of this habit. He had dined even with me; and on the evening of that dinner, as on this Alpine afternoon, I had been at no pains to hold my tongue, absorbed as I inveterately was in a study of the question that always rose before me to such a height in his fair square strong stature.

This question was all the more tormenting that I'm sure he never suspected himself of imposing it, any more than he had even observed that every day of his life every one listened to him at dinner. He used to be called

"subjective and introspective" in the weekly papers, but if that meant he was avid of tribute no distinguished man could in society have been less so. He never talked about himself; and this was an article on which, though it would have been tremendously worthy of him, he apparently never even reflected. He had his hours and his habits, his tailor and his hatter, his hygiene and his particular wine, but all these things together never made up an attitude. Yet they constituted the only one he ever adopted, and it was easy for him to refer to our being "nicer" abroad than at home. *He* was exempt from variations, and not a shade either less or more nice in one place than in another. He differed from other people, but never from himself—save in the extraordinary sense I shall throw my light upon—and he struck me as having neither moods nor sensibilities nor preferences. He might have been always in the same company, so far as he recognized any influence from age or condition or sex: he addressed himself to men, and gossiped with all men alike, talking no better to clever folk than to dull. I used to wail to myself over his way of liking one subject—so far as I could tell—precisely as much as another: there were some I hated so myself. I never found him anything but loud and liberal and cheerful, and I never heard him utter a paradox or express a shade or play with an idea. That fancy about our being "human" was, in his conversation, quite an exceptional flight. His opinions were sound and second-rate, and of his perceptions it was too mystifying to think. I envied him his magnificent health.

Vawdrey had marched with his even pace and his perfectly good conscience into the flat country of an-

ecdote, where stories are visible from afar like windmills and sign-posts; but I observed after a little that Lady Mellifont's attention wandered. I happened to be sitting next her. I noticed that her eyes rambled a little anxiously over the lower slopes of the mountains. At last, after looking at her watch, she said to me: "Do you know where they went?"

"Do you mean Mrs. Adney and Lord Mellifont?"

"Lord Mellifont and Mrs. Adney." Her ladyship's speech seemed—unconsciously indeed—to correct me, but it didn't occur to me that this might be an effect of jealousy. I imputed to her no such vulgar sentiment: in the first place because I liked her, and in the second because it would always occur to one rather quickly to put Lord Mellifont, whatever the connexion, first. He *was* first—extraordinarily first. I don't say greatest or wisest or most renowned, but essentially at the top of the list and the head of the table. That's a position by itself, and his wife was naturally accustomed to see him in it. My phrase had sounded as if Mrs. Adney had taken him; but it was not possible for him to be taken—he only took. No one, in the nature of things, could know this better than Lady Mellifont. I had originally been rather afraid of her, thinking her, with her stiff silences and the extreme blackness of almost everything that made up her person, somewhat hard, even a little saturnine. Her paleness seemed slightly grey and her glossy black hair metallic, even as the brooches and bands and combs with which it was inveterately adorned. She was in perpetual mourning, and wore numberless ornaments of jet and onyx, a thousand clicking chains and bugles and beads. I had heard Mrs. Adney call her the

Queen of Night, and the term was descriptive if you took the night for cloudy. She had a secret, and if you didn't find it out as you knew her better you at least felt sure she was gentle unaffected and limited, as well as rather submissively sad. She was like a woman with a painless malady. I told her that I had merely seen her husband and his companion stroll down the glen together about an hour before, and suggested that Mr. Adney would perhaps know something of their intentions.

Vincent Adney, who, though fifty years old, looked like a good little boy on whom it had been impressed that children shouldn't talk in company, acquitted himself with remarkable simplicity and taste of the position of husband of a great exponent of comedy. When all was said about her making it easy for him one couldn't help admiring the charmed affection with which he took everything for granted. It's difficult for a husband not on the stage, or at least in the theatre, to be graceful about a wife so conspicuous there; but Adney did more than carry it off, the awkwardness—he taught it ever so oddly to make *him* interesting. He set his beloved to music; and you remember how genuine his music could be—the only English compositions I ever saw a foreigner care for. His wife was in them somewhere always; they were a free rich translation of the impression she produced. She seemed, as one listened, to pass laughing, with loosened hair and the gait of a wood-nymph, across the scene. He had been only a little fiddler at her theatre, always in his place during the acts; but she had made him something rare and brave and misunderstood. Their superiority had become a kind of partnership, and their happiness was a part of the happi-

ness of their friends. Adney's one discomfort was that he couldn't write a play for his wife, and the only way he meddled with her affairs was by asking impossible people if *they* couldn't.

Lady Mellifont, after looking across at him a moment, remarked to me that she would rather not put any question to him. She added the next minute: "I had rather people shouldn't see I'm nervous."

"*Are* you nervous?"

"I always become so if my husband's away from me for any time."

"Do you imagine something has happened to him?"

"Yes, always. Of course I'm used to it."

"Do you mean his tumbling over precipices—that sort of thing?"

"I don't know exactly *what* I fear: it's the general sense that he'll never come back."

She said so much and withheld so much that the only way to treat her idiosyncrasy seemed the jocular. "Surely he'll never forsake you!" I laughed.

She looked at the ground a moment. "Oh at bottom I'm easy."

"Nothing can ever happen to a man so accomplished, so infallible, so armed at all points," I went on in the same spirit.

"Oh you don't know how he's armed!" she returned with such an odd quaver that I could account for it only by her being nervous. This idea was confirmed by her moving just afterwards, changing her seat rather pointlessly, not as if to cut our conversation short, but because she was worried. I could scarcely enter into her feeling, though I was presently relieved to see Mrs. Adney come

towards us. She had in her hand a big bunch of wild flowers, but was not closely attended by Lord Mellifont. I quickly saw, however, that she had no disaster to announce; yet as I knew there was a question Lady Mellifont would like to hear answered, without wishing to ask it, I expressed to her at once the hope that his lordship hadn't remained in a crevasse.

"Oh no; he left me but three minutes ago. He has gone into the house." Blanche Adney rested her eyes on mine an instant—a mode of intercourse to which no man, for himself, could ever object. The interest on this occasion was quickened by the particular thing the eyes happened to say. What they usually said was only: "Oh yes, I'm charming, I know, but don't make a fuss about it. I only want a new part—I do, I do, I do!" At present they added dimly, surreptitiously and of course sweetly—since that was the way they did everything: "It's all right, but something did happen. Perhaps I'll tell you later." She turned to Lady Mellifont, and the transition to simple gaiety suggested her mastery of her profession. "I've brought him safe. We had a charming walk."

"I'm so very glad," said Lady Mellifont with her faint smile; continuing vaguely, as she got up: "He must have gone to dress for dinner. Isn't it rather near?" She moved away to the hotel in her leave-taking simplifying fashion, and the rest of us, at the mention of dinner, looked at each other's watches as if to shift the responsibility for such grossness. The head-waiter, essentially, like all head-waiters, a man of the world, allowed us hours and places of our own, so that in the evening, apart under the lamp, we formed a compact, an indulged

little circle. But it was only the Mellifonts who "dressed" and as to whom it was recognized that they naturally *would* dress: she exactly in the same manner as on any other evening of her ceremonious existence—she wasn't a woman whose habits could take account of anything so mutable as fitness—and he, on the other hand, with remarkable adjustment and suitability. He was almost as much a man of the world as the head-waiter, and spoke almost as many languages; but he abstained from courting a comparison of dress-coats and white waistcoats, analysing the occasion in a much finer way—into black velvet and blue velvet and brown velvet, for instance, into delicate harmonies of necktie and subtle laxities of shirt. He had a costume for every function and a moral for every costume; and his functions and costumes and morals were ever a part of the amusement of life—a part at any rate of its beauty and romance—for an immense circle of spectators. For his particular friends indeed these things were more than an amusement; they were a topic, a social support and of course in addition a constant theme for speculative suspense. If his wife hadn't been present before dinner they were what the rest of us probably would have been putting our heads together about.

Clare Vawdrey had a fund of anecdote on the whole question: he had known Lord Mellifont almost from the beginning. It was a peculiarity of this nobleman that there could be no conversation about him that didn't instantly take the form of anecdote, and a still further distinction that there could apparently be no anecdote that wasn't on the whole to his honour. At whatever moment he came into a room people might say frankly:

"Of course we were telling stories about you!" As consciences go, in London, the general conscience would have been good. Moreover it would have been impossible to imagine his taking such a tribute otherwise than amiably, for he was always as unperturbed as an actor with the right cue. He had never in his life needed the prompter—his very embarrassments had been rehearsed. For myself, when he was talked about I had always had a sense of our speaking of the dead: it had the mark of that peculiar accumulation of relish. His reputation was a kind of gilded obelisk, as if he had been buried beneath it; the body of legend and reminiscence of which he was to be the subject had crystallized in advance.

This ambiguity sprang, I suppose, from the fact that the mere sound of his name and air of his person, the general expectation he created, had somehow a pitch so romantic and abnormal. The experience of his urbanity always came later; the prefigurement, the legend paled then before the reality. I remember that on the evening I refer to the reality struck me as supreme. The handsomest man of his period could never have looked better, and he sat among us like a bland conductor controlling by an harmonious play of arm an orchestra still a little rough. He directed the conversation by gestures as irresistible as they were vague; one felt as if without him it wouldn't have had anything to call a tone. This was essentially what he contributed to any occasion—what he contributed above all to English public life. He pervaded it, he coloured it, he embellished it, and without him it would have lacked, comparatively speaking, a vocabulary. Certainly it wouldn't have had a style, for a style was what it had in having Lord Melli-

font. He *was* a style. I was freshly struck with it as, in the *salle-à-manger* of the little Swiss inn, we resigned ourselves to inevitable veal. Confronted with *his* high form—I must parenthesize that it wasn't confronted much—Clare Vawdrey's talk suggested the reporter contrasted with the bard. It was interesting to watch the shock of characters from which of an evening so much would be expected. There was however no concussion —it was all muffled and minimized in Lord Mellifont's tact. It was rudimentary with him to find the solution of such a problem in playing the host, assuming responsibilities that carried with them their sacrifice. He had indeed never been a guest in his life; he was the host, the patron, the moderator at every board. If there was a defect in his manner—and I suggest this under my breath—it was that he had a little more art than any conjunction, even the most complicated, could possibly require. At any rate one made one's reflexions in noticing how the accomplished peer handled the case and how the sturdy man of letters hadn't a suspicion that the case —and least of all he himself as part of it—was handled. Lord Mellifont expended treasures of tact, and Clare Vawdrey never dreamed he was doing it.

Vawdrey had no suspicion of any such precaution even when Blanche Adney asked him if he really didn't see by this time his third act—an enquiry into which she introduced a subtlety of her own. She had settled it for him that he was to write her a play and that the heroine, should he but do his duty, would be the part for which she had immemorially longed. She was forty years old—this could be no secret to those who had admired her from the first—and might now reach out her

hand and touch her uttermost goal. It gave a shade of tragic passion—perfect actress of comedy as she was—to her desire not to miss the great thing. The years had passed, and still she had missed it; none of the things she had done was the thing she had dreamed of, so that at present she had no more time to lose. This was the canker in the rose, the ache beneath the smile. It made her touching—made her melancholy more arch than her mirth. She had done the old English and the new French, and had charmed for a while her generation; but she was haunted by the vision of a bigger chance, of something truer to the conditions that lay near her. She was tired of Sheridan and she hated Bowdler; she called for a canvas of a finer grain. The worst of it, to my sense, was that she would never extract her modern comedy from the great mature novelist, who was as incapable of producing it as he was of threading a needle. She coddled him, she talked to him, she made love to him, as she frankly proclaimed; but she dwelt in illusions—she would have to live and die with Bowdler.

It is difficult to be cursory over this charming woman, who was beautiful without beauty and complete with a dozen deficiencies. The perspective of the stage made her over, and in society she was like the model off the pedestal. She was the picture walking about, which to the artless social mind was a perpetual surprise—a miracle. People thought she told them the secrets of the pictorial nature, in return for which they gave her relaxation and tea. She told them nothing and she drank the tea; but they had all the same the best of the bargain. Vawdrey was really at work on a play; but if he had begun it because he liked her I think he let it drag for

the same reason. He secretly felt the atrocious difficulty and hung off, for illusion's sake, from the point of tests and tribulations. In spite of which nothing could be so agreeable as to have such a question open with Blanche Adney, and from time to time he doubtless put something very good into the play. If he deceived Mrs. Adney it was only because in her despair she was determined to be deceived. To her appeal about their third act he replied that before dinner he had written a splendid passage.

"Before dinner?" I said. *"Why, cher grand maître,* before dinner you were holding us all spellbound on the terrace."

My words were a joke, because I thought his had been; but for the first time that I could remember I noted in his face a shade of confusion. He looked at me hard, throwing back his head quickly, the least bit like a horse who has been pulled up short. "Oh it was before that," he returned naturally enough.

"Before that you were playing billiards with *me,*" Lord Mellifont threw off.

"Then it must have been yesterday," said Vawdrey.

But he was in a tight place. "You told me this morning you did nothing yesterday," Blanche objected.

"I don't think I really know when I do things." He looked vaguely, without helping himself, at a dish just offered him.

"It's enough if *we* know," smiled Lord Mellifont.

"I don't believe you've written a line," said Blanche Adney.

"I think I could repeat you the scene." And Vawdrey took refuge in *haricots verts.*

"Oh do—oh do!" two or three of us cried.

"After dinner, in the salon, it will be a high *régal,*" Lord Mellifont declared.

"I'm not sure, but I'll try," Vawdrey went on.

"Oh you lovely sweet man!" exclaimed the actress, who was practising what she believed to be Americanisms and was resigned even to an American comedy.

"But there must be this condition," said Vawdrey: "you must make your husband play."

"Play while you're reading? Never!"

"I've too much vanity," said Adney.

The direction of Lord Mellifont's fine eyes distinguished him. "You must give us the overture before the curtain rises. That's a peculiarly delightful moment."

"I shan't read—I shall just speak," said Vawdrey.

"Better still, let me go and get your manuscript," Blanche suggested.

Vawdrey replied that the manuscript didn't matter; but an hour later, in the salon, we wished he might have had it. We sat expectant, still under the spell of Adney's violin. His wife, in the foreground, on an ottoman, was all impatience and profile, and Lord Mellifont, in the chair—it was always *the* chair, Lord Mellifont's—made our grateful little group feel like a social science congress or a distribution of prizes. Suddenly, instead of beginning, our tame lion began to roar out of tune—he had clean forgotten every word. He was very sorry, but the lines absolutely wouldn't come to him; he was utterly ashamed, but his memory was a blank. He didn't look in the least ashamed—Vawdrey had never looked ashamed in his life; he was only imperturbably and mer-

rily natural. He protested that he had never expected to make such a fool of himself, but we felt that this wouldn't prevent the incident's taking its place among his jolliest reminiscences. It was only *we* who were humiliated, as if he had played us a premeditated trick. This was an occasion, if ever, for Lord Mellifont's tact, which descended on us all like balm: he told us, in his charming artistic way, his way of bridging over arid intervals (he had a *débit*—there was nothing to approach it in England—like the actors of the Comédie Française) of his own collapse on a momentous occasion, the delivery of an address to a mighty multitude, when, finding he had forgotten his memoranda, he fumbled, on the terrible platform, the cynosure of every eye, fumbled vainly in irreproachable pockets for indispensable notes. But the point of his story was finer than that of our other entertainer's easy fiasco; for he sketched with a few light gestures the brilliancy of a performance which had risen superior to embarrassment, had resolved itself, we were left to divine, into an effort recognized at the moment as not absolutely a blot on what the public was so good as to call his reputation.

"Play up—play up!" cried Blanche Adney, tapping her husband and remembering how on the stage a *contretemps* is always drowned in music. Adney threw himself upon his fiddle, and I said to Clare Vawdrey that his mistake could easily be corrected by his sending for the manuscript. If he'd tell me where it was I'd immediately fetch it from his room. To this he replied: "My dear fellow, I'm afraid there *is* no manuscript."

"Then you've not written anything?"

"I'll write it to-morrow."

"Ah you trifle with us!" I said in much mystification.

He seemed at this to think better of it. "If there *is* anything you'll find in on my table."

One of the others, at the moment, spoke to him, and Lady Mellifont remarked audibly, as to correct gently our want of consideration, that Mr. Adney was playing something very beautiful. I had noticed before how fond she appeared of music; she always listened to it in a hushed transport. Vawdrey's attention was drawn away, but it didn't seem to me the words he had just dropped constituted a definite permission to go to his room. Moreover I wanted to speak to Blanche Adney; I had something to ask her. I had to await my chance, however, as we remained silent a while for her husband, after which the conversation became general. It was our habit to go early to bed, but a little of the evening was still left. Before it quite waned I found an opportunity to tell Blanche that Vawdrey had given me leave to put my hand on his manuscript. She adjured me, by all I held sacred, to bring it at once, to give it to her; and her insistence was proof against my suggestion that it would now be too late for him to begin to read: besides which the charm was broken—the others wouldn't care. It wasn't, she assured me, too late for *her* to begin; therefore I was to possess myself without more delay of the precious pages. I told her she should be obeyed in a moment, but I wanted her first to satisfy my just curiosity. What had happened before dinner, while she was on the hills with Lord Mellifont?

"How do you know anything happened?"

"I saw it in your face when you came back."

"And they call me an actress!" my friend cried.

"What do they call *me?*" I asked.

"You're a searcher of hearts—that frivolous thing an observer."

"I wish you'd let an observer write you a play!" I broke out.

"People don't care for what you write: you'd break any run of luck."

"Well, I see plays all round me," I declared; "the air is full of them to-night."

"The air? Thank you for nothing! I only wish my table-drawers were."

"Did he make love to you on the glacier?" I went on.

She stared—then broke into the graduated ecstasy of her laugh. "Lord Mellifont, poor dear? What a funny place! It would indeed be the place for *our* love!"

"Did he fall into a crevasse?" I continued.

Blanche Adney looked at me again as she had done—so unmistakably though briefly—when she came up before dinner with her hands full of flowers. "I don't know into what he fell. I'll tell you to-morrow."

"He did come down then?"

"Perhaps he went up," she laughed. "It's really strange."

"All the more reason you should tell me to-night."

"I must think it over; I must puzzle it out."

"Oh, if you want conundrums I'll throw in another," I said. "What's the matter with the Master?"

"The master of what?"

"Of every form of dissimulation. Vawdrey hasn't written a line."

"Go and get his papers and we'll see."

"I don't like to expose him," I said.

"Why not, if I expose Lord Mellifont?"

"Oh I'd do anything for that," I allowed. "But why should Vawdrey have made a false statement? It's very curious."

"It's very curious," Blanche Adney repeated with a musing air and her eyes on Lord Mellifont. Then rousing herself she added: "Go and look in his room."

"In Lord Mellifont's?"

She turned to me quickly. *"That* would be a way!"

"A way to what?"

"To find out—to find out!" She spoke gaily and excitedly, but suddenly checked herself. "We're talking awful nonsense."

"We're mixing things up, but I'm struck with your idea. Get Lady Mellifont to let you."

"Oh *she* has looked!" Blanche brought out with the oddest dramatic expression. Then after a movement of her beautiful uplifted hand, as if to brush away a fantastic vision, she added imperiously: "Bring me the scene—bring me the scene!"

"I go for it," I answered; "but don't tell me I can't write a play."

She left me, but my errand was arrested by the approach of a lady who had produced a birthday-book—we had been threatened with it for several evenings—and who did me the honour to solicit my autograph. She had been asking the others and couldn't decently leave me out. I could usually remember my name, but it always took me long to recall my date, and even when I had done so I was never very sure. I hesitated between two days, remarking to my petitioner that I would sign on both if it would give her any satisfaction. She

opined that I had surely been born but once, and I replied of course that on the day I made her acquaintance I had been born again. I mention the feeble joke only to show that, with the obligatory inspection of the other autographs, we gave some minutes to this transaction. The lady departed with her book, and I then found the company had scattered. I was alone in the little salon that had been appropriated to our use. My first impression was one of disappointment: if Vawdrey had gone to bed I didn't wish to disturb him. While I hesitated however I judged that my friend must still be afoot. A window was open and the sound of voices outside came in to me: Blanche was on the terrace with her dramatist and they were talking about the stars. I went to the window for a glimpse—the Alpine night was splendid. My friends had stepped out together; Mrs. Adney had picked up a cloak; she looked as I had seen her look in the wing of the theatre. They were silent a while, and I heard the roar of a neighbouring torrent. I turned back into the room, and its quiet lamplight gave me an idea. Our companions had dispersed—it was late for a pastoral country—and we three should have the place to ourselves. Clare Vawdrey had written his scene, which couldn't but be splendid; and his reading it to us there at such an hour would be a thing always to remember. I'd bring down his manuscript and meet the two with it as they came in.

I quitted the salon for this purpose; I had been in his room and knew it was on the second floor, the last in a long corridor. A minute later my hand was on the knob of the door, which I naturally pushed open without knocking. It was equally natural that in the absence of its

occupant the room should be dark; the more so as, the end of the corridor being at that hour unlighted, the obscurity was not immediately diminished by the opening of the door. I was only aware at first that I had made no mistake and that, the window-curtains not being drawn, I had before me a couple of vague star-lighted apertures. Their aid, however, was not sufficient to enable me to find what I had come for, and my hand, in my pocket, was already on the little box of matches that I always carry for cigarettes. Suddenly I withdrew it with a start, uttering an ejaculation, an apology. I had entered the wrong room; a glance prolonged for three seconds showed me a figure seated at a table near one of the windows—a figure I had at first taken for a travelling-rug thrown over a chair. I retreated with a sense of intrusion; but as I did so I took in more rapidly than it takes me to express it, first that this was Vawdrey's room and second that, surprisingly, its occupant himself sat before me. Checking myself on the threshold I was briefly bewildered, but before I knew it I had called out: "Hullo, is that you, Vawdrey?"

He neither turned nor answered me, but my question received an immediate and practical reply in the opening of a door on the other side of the passage. A servant with a candle had come out of the opposite room, and in this flitting illumination I definitely recognized the man whom an instant before I had to the best of my belief left below in conversation with Mrs. Adney. His back was half-turned to me and he bent over the table in the attitude of writing, but I took in at every pore his identity. "I beg your pardon—I thought you were downstairs," I said; and as the person before me gave

no sign of hearing I added: "If you're busy I won't disturb you." I backed out, closing the door—I had been in the place, I suppose, less than a minute. I had a sense of mystification which however deepened infinitely the next instant. I stood there with my hand still on the knob of the door, overtaken by the oddest impression of my life. Vawdrey was seated at his table, and it was a very natural place for him; but why was he writing in the dark and why hadn't he answered me? I waited a few seconds for the sound of some movement, to see if he wouldn't rouse himself from his abstraction—a fit conceivable in a great writer—and call out "Oh my dear fellow, is it you?" But I heard only the stillness, I felt only the star-lighted dusk of the room, with the unexpected presence it enclosed. I turned away, slowly retracing my steps, and came confusedly downstairs. The lamp still burned in the salon, but the room was empty. I passed round to the door of the hotel and stepped out. Empty too was the terrace. Blanche Adney and the gentleman with her had apparently come in. I hung about five minutes—then I went to bed.

II

I slept badly, for I was agitated. On looking back at these queer occurrences (you'll see presently *how* queer!) I perhaps suppose myself more affected than in fact; for great anomalies are never so great at first as after we've reflected on them. It takes us time to use up explanations. I was vaguely nervous—I had been sharply startled; but there was nothing I couldn't clear up by asking Blanche Adney, the first thing in the morn-

ing, who had been with her on the terrace. Oddly enough, however, when the morning dawned—it dawned admirably—I felt less desire to satisfy myself on this point than to escape, to brush away the shadow of my stupefaction. I saw the day would be splendid, so that the fancy took me to spend it, as I had spent happy days of youth, in a lonely mountain ramble. I dressed early, partook of conventional coffee, put a big roll into one pocket and a small flask into the other, and, with a stout stick in my hand, went forth into the high places. My story isn't closely concerned with the charming hours I passed there—hours of the kind that make intense memories. If I roamed away half of them on the shoulders of the hills, I lay on the sloping grass for the other half and, with my cap pulled over my eyes—save a peep for immensities of view—listened, in the bright stillness, to the mountain bee and felt most things sink and dwindle. Clare Vawdrey grew small, Blanche Adney grew dim, Lord Mellifont grew old, and before the day was over I forgot I had ever been puzzled. When in the late afternoon I made my way down to the inn there was nothing I wanted so much to learn as that dinner was at hand. To-night I dressed, in a manner, and by the time I was presentable they were all at table.

In their company again my little problem came back to me, so that I was curious to see if Vawdrey wouldn't look at me with a certain queerness. But he didn't look at me at all; which gave me a chance both to be patient and to wonder why I should hesitate to ask him my question across the table. I did hesitate, and with the consciousness of doing so came back a little of the agitation I had left behind me, or below me, during the day.

I wasn't ashamed of my scruple, however: it was only a fine discretion. What I vaguely felt was that a public enquiry wouldn't have been fair. Lord Mellifont was there, of course, to mitigate with his perfect manner all consequences; but I think it was present to me that with these particular elements his lordship wouldn't be at home. The moment we got up therefore I approached Mrs. Adney, asking her whether, as the evening was lovely, she wouldn't take a turn with me outside.

"You've walked a hundred miles; hadn't you better be quiet?" she replied.

"I'd walk a hundred miles more to get you to tell me something."

She looked at me an instant with a little of the odd consciousness I had sought, but hadn't found, in Clare Vawdrey's eyes. "Do you mean what became of Lord Mellifont?"

"Of Lord Mellifont?" With my new speculation I had lost that thread.

"Where's your memory, foolish man? We talked of it last evening."

"Ah yes!" I cried, recalling; "we shall have lots to discuss." I drew her out to the terrace and, before we had gone three steps, said to her: "Who was with you here last night?"

"Last night?"—she was as wide of the mark as I had been.

"At ten o'clock—just after our company broke up. You came out here with a gentleman. You talked about the stars."

She stared a moment, then gave her laugh. "Are you jealous of dear Vawdrey?"

"Then it was he?"

"Certainly it was he."

"And how long did he stay?"

She laughed again. "You have it badly! He stayed about a quarter of an hour—perhaps rather more. We walked some distance. He talked about his play. There you have it all. That is the only witchcraft I have used."

Well, it wasn't enough for me; so "What did Vawdrey do afterwards?" I continued.

"I haven't the least idea. I left him and went to bed."

"At what time did you go to bed?"

"At what time did *you?* I happen to remember that I parted from Mr. Vawdrey at ten twenty-five," said Mrs. Adney. "I came back into the salon to pick up a book, and I noticed the clock."

"In other words you and Vawdrey distinctly lingered here from about five minutes past ten till the hour you mention?"

"I don't know how distinct we were, but we were very jolly. Où voulez-vous en venir?" Blanche Adney asked.

"Simply to this, dear lady: that at the time your companion was occupied in the manner you describe he was also engaged in literary composition in his own room."

She stopped short for it, and her eyes had a sheen in the darkness. She wanted to know if I challenged her veracity; and I replied that on the contrary I backed it up—it made the case so interesting. She returned that this would only be if she should back up mine; which however I had no difficulty in persuading her to do after I had

related to her circumstantially the incident of my quest of the manuscript—the manuscript which at the time, for a reason I could now understand, appeared to have passed so completely out of her own head.

"His talk made me forget it—I forgot I sent you for it. He made up for his fiasco in the salon: he declaimed me the scene," said Blanche. She had dropped on a bench to listen to me and, as we sat there, had briefly cross-examined me. Then she broke out into fresh laughter. "Oh the eccentricities of genius!"

"Yes indeed! They seem greater even than I supposed."

"Oh the mysteries of greatness!"

"You ought to know all about them, but they take me by surprise," I declared.

"Are you absolutely certain it was Vawdrey?" my companion asked.

"If it wasn't he who in the world was it? That a strange gentleman, looking exactly like him and of like literary pursuits, should be sitting in his room at that hour of the night and writing at his table *in the dark,*" I insisted, "would be practically as wonderful as my own contention."

"Yes, why in the dark?" my friend mused.

"Cats can see in the dark," I said.

She smiled at me dimly. "Did it look like a cat?"

"No, dear lady, but I'll tell you what it did look like —it looked like the author of Vawdrey's admirable works. It looked infinitely more like him than our friend does himself," I pronounced.

"Do you mean it was somebody he gets to do them?"

"Yes, while he dines out and disappoints you."

"Disappoints me?" she murmured artlessly.

"Disappoints *me*—disappoints every one who looks in him for the genius that created the pages they adore. Where is it in his talk?"

"Ah last night he was splendid," said the actress.

"He's always splendid, as your morning bath is splendid, or a sirloin of beef, or the railway-service to Brighton. But he's never rare."

"I see what you mean."

I could have hugged her—and perhaps I did. "That's what makes you such a comfort to talk to. I've often wondered—now I know. There are two of them."

"What a delightful idea!"

"One goes out, the other stays at home. One's the genius, the other's the bourgeois, and it's only the bourgeois whom we personally know. He talks, he circulates, he's awfully popular, he flirts with you—"

"Whereas it's the genius *you* are privileged to flirt with!" Mrs. Adney broke in. "I'm much obliged to you for the distinction."

I laid my hand on her arm. "See him yourself. Try it, test it, go to his room."

"Go to his room? It wouldn't be proper!" she cried in the manner of her best comedy.

"Anything's proper in such an enquiry. If you see him it settles it."

"How charming—to settle it!" She thought a moment, then sprang up. "Do you mean *now?*"

"Whenever you like."

"But suppose I should find the wrong one?" she said with an exquisite effect.

"The wrong one? Which one do you call the right?"

"The wrong one for a lady to go and see. Suppose I shouldn't find—the genius?"

"Oh I'll look after the other," I returned. Then as I had happened to glance about me I added: "Take care—here comes Lord Mellifont."

"I wish you'd look after *him,*" she said with a drop of her voice.

"What's the matter with him?"

"That's just what I was going to tell you."

"Tell me now. He's not coming."

Blanche looked a moment. Lord Mellifont, who appeared to have emerged from the hotel to smoke a meditative cigar, had paused at a distance from us and stood admiring the wonders of the prospect, discernible even in the dusk. We strolled slowly in another direction, and she presently resumed: "My idea's almost as droll as yours."

"I don't call mine droll: it's beautiful."

"There's nothing so beautiful as the droll," Mrs. Adney returned.

"You take a professional view. But I'm all ears." My curiosity was indeed alive again.

"Well then, my dear friend, if Clare Vawdrey's double—and I'm bound to say I think that the more of him the better—his lordship there has the opposite complaint: he isn't even whole."

We stopped once more, simultaneously. "I don't understand."

"No more do I. But I've a fancy that if there are two of Mr. Vawdrey, there isn't so much as one, all told, of Lord Mellifont."

I considered a moment, then I laughed out. "I think I see what you mean!"

"That's what makes *you* a comfort." She didn't, alas, hug me, but she promptly went on. "Did you ever see him alone?"

I tried to remember. "Oh yes—he has been to see me."

"Ah then he wasn't alone."

"And I've been to see *him*—in his study."

"Did he know you were there?"

"Naturally—I was announced."

She glared at me like a lovely conspirator. "You mustn't *be* announced!" With this she walked on.

I rejoined her, breathless. "Do you mean one must come upon him when he doesn't know it?"

"You must take him unawares. You must go to his room—that's what you must do."

If I was elated by the way our mystery opened out I was also, pardonably, a little confused. "When I know he's not there?"

"When you know he *is*."

"And what shall I see?"

"You won't see anything!" she cried as we turned round.

We had reached the end of the terrace and our movement brought us face to face with Lord Mellifont, who, addressing himself again to his walk, had now, without indiscretion, overtaken us. The sight of him at that moment was illuminating, and it kindled a great backward train, connecting itself with one's general impression of the personage. As he stood there smiling at us

and waving a practised hand into the transparent night—he introduced the view as if it had been a candidate and "supported" the very Alps—as he rose before us in the delicate fragrance of his cigar and all his other delicacies and fragrances, with more perfections somehow heaped on his handsome head than one had ever seen accumulated before or elsewhere, he struck me as so essentially, so conspicuously and uniformly the public character that I read in a flash the answer to Blanche's riddle. He was all public and had no corresponding private life, just as Clare Vawdrey was all private and had no corresponding public. I had heard only half my companion's tale, yet as we joined Lord Mellifont—he had followed us, liking Mrs. Adney, but it was always to be conceived of him that he accepted society rather than sought it—as we participated for half an hour in the distributed wealth of his discourse I felt with unabashed duplicity that we had, as it were, found him out. I was even more deeply diverted by that whisk of the curtain to which the actress had just treated me than I had been by my own discovery; and if I wasn't ashamed of my share of her secret any more than of having divided my own with her—though my own was, of the two mysteries, the more glorious for the personage involved—this was because there was no cruelty in my advantage, but on the contrary an extreme tenderness and a positive compassion. Oh he was safe with me, and I felt moreover rich and enlightened, as if I had suddenly got the universe into my pouch. I had learned what an affair of the spot and the moment a great appearance may be. It would doubtless be too much to say that I had always suspected the possibility, in the background of his lordship's be-

ing, of some such beautiful instance; but it's at least a fact that, patronizing as such words may sound, I had been conscious of a certain reserve of indulgence for him. I had secretly pitied him for the perfection of his performance, had wondered what blank face such a mask had to cover, what was left to him for the immitigable hours in which a man sits down with himself, or, more serious still, with that intenser self his lawful wife. How was he at home and what did he do when he was alone? There was something in Lady Mellifont that gave a point to these researches—something that suggested how even to her he must have been still the public character and she beset with similar questionings. She had never cleared them up: that was her eternal trouble. We therefore knew more than she did, Blanche Adney and I; but we wouldn't tell her for the world, nor would she probably thank us for doing so. She preferred the relative grandeur of uncertainty. She wasn't at home with him, so she couldn't say; and with her he wasn't alone, so he couldn't show her. He represented to his wife and was a hero to his servants, and what one wanted to arrive at was what really became of him when no eye could see—and *a fortiori* no soul admire. He relaxed and rested presumably; but how utter a blank mustn't it take to repair such a plenitude of presence!—how intense an *entr' acte* to make possible more such performances! Lady Mellifont was too proud to pry, and as she had never looked through a keyhole she remained dignified and unrelieved.

It may have been a fancy of mine that Mrs. Adney drew out our companion, or it may be that the practical irony of our relation to him at such a moment made me

see him more vividly: at any rate he never had struck me as so dissimilar from what he would have been if we hadn't offered him a reflexion of his image. We were only a concourse of two, but he had never been more public. His perfect manner had never been more perfect, his remarkable tact never more remarkable, his one conceivable *raison d'être,* the absolute singleness of his identity, never more attested. I had a tacit sense that it would all be in the morning papers, with a leader, and also a secretly exhilarating one that I knew something that wouldn't be, that never could be, though any enterprising journal would give me a fortune for it. I must add, however, that in spite of my enjoyment—it was almost sensual, like that of a consummate dish or an unprecedented pleasure—I was eager to be alone again with Mrs. Adney, who owed me an anecdote. This proved impossible that evening, for some of the others came out to see what he found so absorbing; and then Lord Mellifont bespoke a little music from the fiddler, who produced his violin and played to us divinely, on our platform of echoes, face to face with the ghosts of the mountains. Before the concert was over I missed our actress and, glancing into the window of the salon, saw her established there with Vawdrey, who was reading out from a manuscript. The great scene had apparently been achieved and was doubtless the more interesting to Blanche from the new lights she had gathered about its author. I judged discreet not to disturb them, and went to bed without seeing her again. I looked out for her betimes the next morning and, as the promise of the day was fair, proposed to her that we should take to the hills, reminding her of the high obligation she had in-

curred. She recognized the obligation and gratified me with her company, but before we had strolled ten yards up the pass she broke out with intensity: "My dear friend, you've no idea how it works in me! I can think of nothing else."

"Than your theory about Lord Mellifont?"

"Oh bother Lord Mellifont! I allude to yours about Mr. Vawdrey, who's much the more interesting person of the two. I'm fascinated by that vision of his—what-do-you-call-it?"

"His alternate identity?"

"His other self: that's easier to say."

"You accept it then, you adopt it?"

"Adopt it? I rejoice in it! It became tremendously vivid to me last evening."

"While he read to you there?"

"Yes, as I listened to him, watched him. It simplified everything, explained everything."

I rose to my triumph. "That's indeed the blessing of it. Is the scene very fine?"

"Magnificent, and he reads beautifully."

"Almost as well as the other one writes!" I laughed.

This made her stop a moment, laying her hand on my arm. "You utter my very impression! I felt he was reading me the work of another."

"In a manner that was such a service to the other," I concurred.

"Such a totally different person," said Blanche. We talked of this difference as we went on, and of what a wealth it constituted, what a resource for life, such a duplication of character.

"It ought to make him live twice as long as other people," I made out.

"Ought to make which of them?"

"Well, both; for after all they're members of a firm, and one of them would never be able to carry on the business without the other. Moreover mere survival would be dreadful for either."

She was silent a little; after which she exclaimed: "I don't know—I wish he *would* survive!"

"May I on my side enquire which?"

"If you can't guess I won't tell you."

"I know the heart of woman. You always prefer the other."

She halted again, looking round her. "Off here, away from my husband, I *can* tell you. I'm in love with him!"

"Unhappy woman, he has no passions," I answered.

"That's exactly why I adore him. Doesn't a woman with my history know the passions of others for insupportable? An actress, poor thing, can't care for any love that's not all on *her* side; she can't afford to be repaid. My marriage proves that: a pretty one, a lucky one like ours, is ruinous. Do you know what was in my mind last night and all the while Mr. Vawdrey read me those beautiful speeches? An insane desire to see the author." And dramatically, as if to hide her shame, Blanche Adney passed on.

"We'll manage that," I returned. "I want another glimpse of him myself. But meanwhile please remember that I've been waiting more than forty-eight hours for the evidence that supports your sketch, intensely suggestive and plausible, of Lord Mellifont's private life."

"Oh Lord Mellifont doesn't interest me."

"He did yesterday," I said.

"Yes, but that was before I fell in love. You blotted him out with *your* story."

"You'll make me sorry I told it. Come," I pleaded, "if you don't let me know how your idea came into your head I shall imagine you simply made it up."

"Let me recollect then, while we wander in this velvet gorge."

We stood at the entrance of a charming crooked valley, a portion of the level floor of which formed the bed of a stream that was smooth with swiftness. We turned into it, and the soft walk beside the clear torrent drew us on and on; till suddenly, as we continued and I waited for my companion to remember, a bend of the ravine showed us Lady Mellifont coming towards us. She was alone, under the canopy of her parasol, drawing her sable train over the turf; and in this form, on the devious ways, she was a sufficiently rare apparition. She mostly took out a footman, who marched behind her on the highroads and whose livery was strange to the rude rustics. She blushed on seeing us, as if she ought somehow to justify her being there; she laughed vaguely and described herself as abroad but for a small early stroll. We stood together thus, exchanging platitudes, and then she told us how she had counted a little on finding her husband.

"Is he in this quarter?" I asked.

"I supposed he would be. He came out an hour ago to sketch."

"Have you been looking for him?" Mrs. Adney put to her.

"A little; not very much," said Lady Mellifont.

Each of the women rested her eyes with some intensity, as it seemed to me, on the eyes of the other. "We'll look for him *for* you, if you like," said Blanche.

"Oh it doesn't matter. I thought I'd join him."

"He won't make his sketch if you don't," my companion hinted.

"Perhaps he will if *you* do," said Lady Mellifont.

"Oh I dare say he'll turn up," I interposed.

"He certainly will if he knows we're here!" Blanche retorted.

"Will you wait while we search?" I asked of Lady Mellifont.

She repeated that it was of no consequence; upon which Mrs. Adney went on: "We'll go into the matter for our own pleasure."

"I wish you a pleasant excursion," said her ladyship, and was turning away when I sought to know if we should inform her husband she was near. "That I've followed him?" She demurred a moment and then jerked out oddly: "I think you had better not." With this she took leave of us, floating a little stiffly down the gorge.

My companion and I watched her retreat; after which we exchanged a stare and a light ghost of a laugh rippled from the actress's lips. "She might be walking in the shrubberies at Mellifont!"

I had my view. "She suspects it, you know."

"And she doesn't want him to guess it. There won't be any sketch."

"Unless we overtake him," I suggested. "In that case we shall find him producing one, in the very most grace-

ful and established attitude, and the queer thing is that it will be brilliant."

"Let us leave him alone—he'll have to come home without it," my friend contributed.

"He'd rather never come home. Oh he'll find a public!"

"Perhaps he'll do it for the cows," Blanche risked; and as I was on the point of rebuking her profanity she went on: "That's simply what I happened to discover."

"What are you speaking of?"

"The incident of day before yesterday."

I jumped at it. "Ah let's have it at last!"

"That's all it was—that I was like Lady Mellifont: I couldn't find him."

"Did you lose him?"

"He lost *me*—that appears to be the way of it. He supposed me gone. And then—!" But she paused, looking—that is smiling—volumes.

"You did find him, however," I said as I wondered, "since you came home with him."

"It was he who found *me*. That again is what must happen. He's there from the moment he knows somebody else is."

"I understand his intermissions," I returned on short reflexion, "but I don't quite seize the law that governs them."

Ah Blanche had quite mastered it! "It's a fine shade, but I caught it at that moment. I had started to come home, I was tired and had insisted on his not coming back with me. We had found some rare flowers—those I brought home—and it was he who had discovered al-

most all of them. It amused him very much, and I knew he wanted to get more; but I was weary and I quitted him. He let me go—where else would have been his tact?—and I was too stupid then to have guessed that from the moment I wasn't there no flower would be—*could* be—gathered. I started homeward, but at the end of three minutes I found I had brought away his penknife—he had lent it to me to trim a branch—and I knew he'd need it. I turned back a few steps to call him, but before I spoke I looked about for him. You can't understand what happened then without having the scene before you."

"You must take me there," I said.

"We may see the wonder here. The place was simply one that offered no chance for concealment—a great gradual hillside without obstructions or cavities or bushes or trees. There were some rocks below me, behind which I myself had disappeared, but from which on coming back I immediately emerged again."

"Then he must have seen you."

"He was too absent, too utterly gone, as gone as a candle blown out; for some reason best known to himself. It was probably some moment of fatigue—he's getting on, you know, so that with the sense of returning solitude the reaction had been proportionately great, the extinction proportionately complete. At any rate the stage was as bare as your hand."

"Couldn't he have been somewhere else?"

"He couldn't have been, in the time, anywhere but just where I had left him. Yet the place was utterly empty—as empty as this stretch of valley in front of us. He had vanished—he had ceased to be. But as soon as my

voice rang out—I uttered his name—he rose before me like the rising sun."

"And where did the sun rise?"

"Just where it ought to—just where he would have been and where I should have seen him had he been like other people."

I had listened with the deepest interest, but it was my duty to think of objections. "How long a time elapsed between the moment you were sure of his absence and the moment you called?"

"Oh but a few seconds. I don't pretend it was long."

"Long enough for you to be really certain?" I said.

"Certain he wasn't there?"

"Yes, and that you weren't mistaken, weren't the victim of some hocus-pocus of your eyesight."

"I may have been mistaken—but I feel too strongly I wasn't. At any rate that's just why I want you to look in his room."

I thought a moment. "How *can* I—when even his wife doesn't dare to?"

"She *wants* to; propose it to her. It wouldn't take much to make her. She does suspect."

I thought another moment. "Did he seem to know?"

"That I had missed him and might have immensely wondered? So it struck me—but with it too that he probably thought he had been quick enough. He has, you see, to think that—to take it mostly for granted."

Ah—I lost myself—who could say? "But did you speak at least of his disappearance?"

"Heaven forbid—*y pensez-vous?* It seemed to me too strange."

"Quite right. And how did he look?"

Trying to think it out again and reconstitute her miracle, Blanche Adney gazed abstractedly up the valley. Suddenly she brought out: "Just as he looks now!" and I saw Lord Mellifont stand before us with his sketch-block. I took in as we met him that he appeared neither suspicious nor blank: he simply stood there, as he stood always everywhere, for the principal feature of the scene. Naturally he had no sketch to show us, but nothing could better have rounded off our actual conception of him than the way he fell into position as we approached. He had been selecting his point of view—he took possession of it with a flourish of the pencil. He leaned against a rock; his beautiful little box of water-colours reposed on a natural table beside him, a ledge of the bank which showed how inveterately nature ministered to his convenience. He painted while he talked and he talked while he painted; and if the painting was as miscellaneous as the talk, the talk would equally have graced an album. We stayed while the exhibition went on, and the conscious profiles of the peaks might to our apprehension have been interested in his success. They grew as black as silhouettes in paper, sharp against a livid sky from which, however, there would be nothing to fear till Lord Mellifont's sketch should be finished. All nature deferred to him and the very elements waited. Blanche Adney communed with me dumbly, and I could read the language of her eyes: "Oh if *we* could only do it as well as that! He fills the stage in a way that beats us." We could no more have left him than we could have quitted the theatre till the play was over; but in due time we turned round with him and strolled back to the inn, before the door of which his lordship,

glancing again at his picture, tore the fresh leaf from the block and presented it with a few happy words to our friend. Then he went into the house; and a moment later, looking up from where we stood, we saw him, above, at the window of his sitting-room—he had the best apartments—watching the signs of the weather.

"He'll have to rest after this," Blanche said, dropping her eyes on her water-colour.

"Indeed he will!" I raised mine to the window: Lord Mellifont had vanished. "He's already reabsorbed."

"Reabsorbed?" I could see the actress was now thinking of something else.

"Into the immensity of things. He has lapsed again. The *entr'acte has begun.*"

"It ought to be long." She surveyed the terrace and as at that moment the head-waiter appeared in the doorway she suddenly turned to address him. "Have you seen Mr. Vawdrey lately?"

The man immediately approached. "He left the house five minutes ago—for a walk, I think. He went down the pass; he had a book."

I was watching the ominous clouds. "He had better have had an umbrella."

The waiter smiled. "I recommended him to take one."

"Thank you," Blanche said; and the Oberkellner withdrew. Then she went on abruptly: "Will you do me a favour?"

"Yes, if you'll do *me* one. Let me see if your picture's signed."

She glanced at the sketch before giving it to me. "For a wonder it isn't."

"It ought to be, for full value. May I keep it a while?"

"Yes, if you'll do what I ask. Take an umbrella and go after Mr. Vawdrey."

"To bring him to Mrs. Adney?"

"To keep him out—as long as you can."

"I'll keep him as long as the rain holds off."

"Oh never mind the rain!" my companion cried.

"Would you have us drenched?"

"Without remorse." Then with a strange light in her eyes: "I'm going to try."

"To try?"

"To see the real one. Oh if I can get at him!" she broke out with passion.

"Try, try!" I returned. "I'll keep our friend all day."

"If I can get at the one who does it"—and she paused with shining eyes—"if I can have it out with him I shall get another act, I shall have my part!"

"I'll keep Vawdrey forever!" I called after her as she passed quickly into the house.

Her audacity was communicable and I stood there in a glow of excitement. I looked at Lord Mellifont's water-colour and I looked at the gathering storm; I turned my eyes again to his lordship's windows and then I bent them on my watch. Vawdrey had so little the start of me that I should have time to overtake him, time even if I should take five minutes to go up to Lord Mellifont's sitting-room—where we had all been hospitably received—and say to him, as a messenger, that Mrs. Adney begged he would bestow on his sketch the

high consideration of his signature. As I again considered this work of art I noted there was something it certainly did lack: what else then but so noble an autograph? It was my duty without loss of time to make the deficiency good, and in accordance with this view I instantly re-entered the hotel. I went up to Lord Mellifont's apartment; I reached the door of his salon. Here, however, I was met by a difficulty with which my extravagance hadn't counted. If I were to knock I should spoil everything; yet was I prepared to dispense with this ceremony? I put myself the question and it embarrassed me; I turned my little picture round and round, but it gave me no answer I wanted. I wanted it to say "Open the door gently, gently, without a sound, yet very quickly: then you'll see what you'll see." I had gone so far as to lay my hand on the knob when I became aware (having my wits so about me) that exactly in the manner I was thinking of—gently, gently, without a sound—another door had moved, and on the opposite side of the hall. At the same instant I found myself smiling rather constrainedly at Lady Mellifont, who, seeing me, had checked herself by the threshold of her room. For a moment, as she stood there, we exchanged two or three ideas that were the more singular for being so unspoken. We had caught each other hovering and to that extent understood each other; but as I stepped over to her—so that we were separated from the sitting-room by the width of the hall—her lips formed the almost soundless entreaty: "Don't!" I could see in her conscious eyes everything the word expressed—the confession of her own curiosity and the dread of the consequences of mine. *"Don't!"* she re-

peated as I stood before her. From the moment my experiment could strike her as an act of violence I was ready to renounce it; yet I thought I caught from her frightened face a still deeper betrayal—a possibility of disappointment if I should give way. It was as if she had said: "I'll let you do it if you'll take the responsibility. Yes, with some one else I'd surprise him. But it would never do for him to think it was I."

"We soon found Lord Mellifont," I observed in allusion to our encounter with her an hour before, "and he was so good as to give this lovely sketch to Mrs. Adney, who has asked me to come up and beg him to put in the omitted signature."

Lady Mellifont took the drawing from me, and I could guess the struggle that went on in her while she looked at it. She waited to speak; then I felt all her delicacies and dignities, all her old timidities and pieties obstruct her great chance. She turned away from me and, with the drawing, went back to her room. She was absent for a couple of minutes, and when she reappeared I could see she had vanquished her temptation, that even with a kind of resurgent horror she had shrunk from it. She had deposited the sketch in the room. "If you'll kindly leave the picture with me I'll see that Mrs. Adney's request is attended to," she said with great courtesy and sweetness, but in a manner that put an end to our colloquy.

I assented, with a somewhat artificial enthusiasm perhaps, and then, to ease off our separation, remarked that we should have a change of weather.

"In that case we shall go—we shall go immediately," the poor lady returned. I was amused at the eager-

ness with which she made this declaration: it appeared to represent a coveted flight into safety, an escape with her threatened secret. I was the more surprised therefore when, as I was turning away, she put out her hand to take mine. She had the pretext of bidding me farewell, but as I shook hands with her on this supposition I felt that what the movement really conveyed was: "I thank you for the help you'd have given me, but it's better as it is. If I should know, who would help me then?" As I went to my room to get my umbrella I said to myself: "She's sure, but she won't put it to the proof."

A quarter of an hour later I had overtaken Clare Vawdrey in the pass, and shortly after this we found ourselves looking for refuge. The storm hadn't only completely gathered, but had broken at the last with extraordinary force. We scrambled up a hillside to an empty cabin, a rough structure that was hardly more than a shed for the protection of cattle. It was a tolerable shelter however, and it had fissures through which we could see the show, watch the grand rage of nature. Our entertainment lasted an hour—an hour that has remained with me as full of odd disparities. While the lightning played with the thunder and the rain gushed in on our umbrellas, I said to myself that Clare Vawdrey was disappointing. I don't know exactly what I should have predicated of a great author exposed to the fury of the elements, I can't say what particular Manfred attitude I should have expected my companion to assume, but it struck me somehow that I shouldn't have looked to him to regale me in such a situation with stories—which I had already heard—about the celebrated Lady

Ringrose. Her ladyship formed the subject of Vawdrey's conversation during this prodigious scene though before it was quite over he had launched out on Mr. Chafer, the scarcely less notorious reviewer. It broke my heart to hear a man like Vawdrey talk of reviewers. The lightning projected a hard clearness upon the truth, familiar to me for years, to which the last day or two had added transcendent support—the irritating certitude that for personal relations this admirable genius thought his second-best good enough. It *was*, no doubt, as society was made, but there was a contempt in the distinction which couldn't fail to be galling to an admirer. The world was vulgar and stupid, and the real man would have been a fool to come out for it when he could gossip and dine by deputy. None the less my heart sank as I felt him practise this economy. I don't know exactly what I wanted; I suppose I wanted him to make an exception for *me*—for me all alone, and all handsomely and tenderly, in the vast horde of the dull. I almost believed he would have done so had he known how I worshipped his talent. But I had never been able to translate this to him, and his application of his principle was relentless. At any rate I was more than ever sure that at such an hour his chair at home at least wasn't empty; *there* was the Manfred attitude, *there* were the responsive flashes. I could only envy Mrs. Adney her presumable enjoyment of them.

The weather drew off at last and the rain abated sufficiently to allow us to emerge from our asylum and make our way back to the inn, where we found on our arrival that our prolonged absence had produced some

agitation. It was judged apparently that the storm had placed us in a predicament. Several of our friends were at the door, who seemed just disconcerted to note we were only drenched. Clare Vawdrey, for some reason, had had the greater soaking, and he took a straight course to his room. Blanche Adney was among the persons collected to look out for us, but as the subject of our speculation came towards her she shrank from him without a greeting; with a movement that I measured as almost one of coldness she turned her back on him and went quickly into the salon. Wet as I was I went in after her; on which she immediately flung round and faced me. The first thing I saw was that she had never been so beautiful. There was a light of inspiration in her, and she broke out to me in the quickest whisper, which was at the same time the loudest cry I have ever heard: "I've got my *part!*"

"You went to his room—I was right?"

"Right?" Blanche Adney repeated. "Ah my dear fellow!" she murmured.

"He was there—you saw him?"

"He saw *me*. It was the hour of my life!"

"It must have been the hour of his, if you were half as lovely as you are at this moment."

"He's splendid," she pursued as if she didn't hear me. "He is the one who does it!" I listened, immensely impressed, and she added: "We understood each other."

"By flashes of lightning?"

"Oh I didn't see the lightning then!"

"How long were you there?" I asked with admiration.

"Long enough to tell him I adore him."

"Ah that's what I've never been able to tell him!" I quite wailed.

"I shall have my part—I shall have my part!" she continued with triumphant indifference; and she flung round the room with the joy of a girl, only checking herself to say: "Go and change your clothes."

"You shall have Lord Mellifont's signature," I said.

"Oh hang Lord Mellifont's signature! He's far nicer than Mr. Vawdrey," she went on irrelevantly.

"Lord Mellifont?" I pretended to enquire.

"Confound Lord Mellifont!" And Blanche Adney, in her elation, brushed by me, whisking again through the open door. Just outside of it she came upon her husband; whereupon with a charming cry of "We're talking of *you*, my love!" she threw herself upon him and kissed him.

I went to my room and changed my clothes, but I remained there till the evening. The violence of the storm had passed over us, but the rain had settled down to a drizzle. On descending to dinner I saw the change in the weather had already broken up our party. The Mellifonts had departed in a carriage and four, they had been followed by others, and several vehicles had been bespoken for the morning. Blanche Adney's was one of them, and on the pretext that she had preparations to make she quitted us directly after dinner. Clare Vawdrey asked me what was the matter with her—she suddenly appeared to dislike him. I forget what answer I gave, but I did my best to comfort him by driving away with him the next day. Blanche had vanished when we came down; but they made up their quarrel in

London, for he finished his play, which she produced. I must add that she is still nevertheless in want of the great part. I've a beautiful one in my head, but she doesn't come to see me to stir me up about it. Lady Mellifont always drops me a kind word when we meet, but that doesn't console me.

THE DARLING

BY ANTON CHEKHOV

OLENKA, the daughter of the retired collegiate assessor Plemiannikov, was sitting on the back steps of her father's house. She was only thinking that the weather was hot, and the flies were annoying and that she was glad the sun would soon be setting and that every now and then a breath of moisture blew down from the dark rain clouds in the east.

A certain Kukin who had a room in the house was standing in the garden, and he was looking up at the sky because he was manager of an open-air theatre called the Tivoli.

"Again," he said, despairingly, "rain again. Rain every day just to spite me. I might as well hang myself and have it over. The rain is ruining me. I lose money every evening." He threw up his hands, and then went on. "What a life, Olga Semyonova! I could weep when I think of it. I work as hard as I can and I lie awake at night to think up new plans. And then what happens? I give the public the best light operas, charming ballets, excellent artists. But do you suppose they appreciate what I give them? They don't understand it. They want common clowns and common circuses. And then think of the weather. The rain began on the tenth of May and we've hardly had a fair

evening in June. The theatre is empty, but I have to pay the rent and the artists just as if it were full."

The clouds gathered again the next afternoon and Kukin laughed hysterically.

"All right, go on raining. Wash the garden away, and wash me away with it. Ruin my chances in this world and in the next. Let the artists sue me for their salaries. Let me go to Siberia—let me go to the gallows. Ha, ha, ha!"

And the same thing again on the third day.

Olenka listened to Kukin silently and solemnly, and sometimes she even cried. She was so sorry for him that she ended by falling in love with him. He was short and thin and his curly hair covered his yellow forehead. He always looked miserable and his mouth twisted to one side when he talked in his high tenor voice. And nevertheless Olenka fell deeply in love with him.

She had never been able to live without adoring some one, and she had loved her father before he began gasping all day in his big chair in his dark room. Then she loved her French master until her aunt began coming from Briansk every year. She was gentle and tenderhearted and sympathetic, and her eyes were also gentle and tender. She was always strong and well and when men saw her plump rosy cheeks and her soft white neck with a little brown mole on it and her simple amiable smile, they smiled too, and they always thought to themselves, "Not so bad." And the women who came to the house took her hand in the middle of a conversation and exclaimed "You darling!" in a burst of delight.

She had been born in the house and it would be her own when her father died. The house was in the Gipsy

Road, on the edge of the town, and it was not far from the Tivoli. From early evening until late at night she could hear the music in the theatre and the explosion of the fireworks, and they seemed to her the explosion of Kukin's guns storming the battlements of the indifferent public. She loved him so much that she did not even want to sleep and when he came home at daybreak she tapped on her window and he saw her face and her smile and one shoulder between the curtains.

He proposed to her and they were married. And when he had a husband's look at her white neck and her plump shoulders he threw up his arms.

"You darling!" he cried.

He was really happy, but he still looked miserable because the rain never once stopped on the afternoon and evening of their wedding-day.

They got on extremely well together. She stayed in his office at the Tivoli and kept the accounts and paid the actors and the workmen. Sometimes her rosy cheeks and her simple radiant smile beamed through the ticket window and sometimes from behind the bar and sometimes back of the scenes. She had already begun telling people that the theatre was the most important thing in the world, and the only thing which could divert people and teach them everything they needed to know at the same time.

"But do you suppose the public realizes that?" she was always saying. "The public loves circuses. Vanichka and I gave the parody of Faust yesterday and nearly all the boxes were empty. But if we had been giving some vulgar thing, of course the theatre would

have been crowded. Vanichka and I are giving Orpheus in Hades to-morrow. Do come."

And she was always repeating what Kukin said about the theatre and the actors. She abused the public for its ignorance of art and for its indifference. She meddled with the actors and the musicians at rehearsals and she cried and went to see the editor whenever the paper printed a disparaging review.

The actors were fond of her, and they were always calling her "Vanichka and I" or "the darling." She sympathized with them, and sometimes she lent them a little money. She cried when they cheated her out of it, but she never complained to her husband.

And they got on well in the winter. They took a theatre inside the town for the whole season, and leased it first to a company from Little Russia, and then to a conjuror, and to a company that was formed in the town.

Olenka became plumper and plumper and she went on beaming with happiness. Kukin became thinner and yellower and he went on complaining of their terrible losses although he had done rather well the whole season. He coughed badly at night and she gave him hot raspberry shrub and lime water and then rubbed him with eau de Cologne and wrapped him in warm shawls.

"You're a sweet lamb," she said, "you're a perfect dear." And she really meant what she said.

About the beginning of Lent he went to get his company together in Moscow. Olenka could not sleep, and she sat at her window every night and looked at the stars and thought that she was like the hens who are restless

all night when the cock is not in the hen-house. Kukin did not come back as soon as he had intended to come and he finally wrote her that he would be back for Easter and gave her some directions about the Tivoli. But on Palm Sunday night there was an alarming knock at the gate that sounded like thumping on an empty barrel. The cook was barely awake when she ran through the puddles to open it.

"Please open the gate," a voice outside it said. "I have a telegram for you."

Olenka's husband had sent her telegrams now and then, but this was the first time she had felt numb with terror. Her hands shook as she opened the telegram and read it.

"Ivan Petrovich died suddenly today. Awaiting innediate commands for huneral Tuesday."

That was the way the telegram was written—"huneral" and "innediate." It was signed by the stage manager of Kukin's company.

"My dearest," Olenka sobbed. "Vanichka, my sweetheart, my dearest. Why did I get to know you and love you? Why did I ever see you? Who will comfort your poor heart-broken Olenka?"

Kukin was buried in Moscow on Tuesday. Olenka went home on Wednesday and she threw herself on her bed and sobbed so loudly that the people in the next house and the people in the street were distressed.

"Poor darling," her neighbours said, crossing themselves. "Poor darling Olga Semyonova! She does take it hard!"

Olenka was going home from church about three

months after Kukin died, and she was a melancholy sight in her deep mourning. A neighbour of hers called Vassili Andreich Pustalov happened to walk along with her. He was manager for Babakiev the timber merchant, but his straw hat and his white waistcoat and gold watch-chain made him look more like a landowner than a business man.

"Everything happens as it has been ordained, Olga Semyonova," he said solemnly and sympathetically, "and when those we love die, we should be brave and not rebel against God's will."

He walked to her gate with Olenka and then he said good-bye and went on. She heard his solemn dignified voice all day, and whenever she shut her eyes she saw his dark beard. She liked him. And apparently he took an interest in her. Not very long after he walked home with her, an older woman whom she barely knew came in to drink coffee with her, and as soon as she sat down she began to talk of what an excellent reliable man Pustalov was and how glad any woman should be to get him for a husband. And Pustalov himself came three days later. He did not stay more than ten minutes and he said very little, but Olenka fell so much in love with him that she did not sleep at all, and the next morning she sent for the match-making lady. The marriage was arranged at once, and the wedding followed.

Pustalov and Olenka got on very well together.

He was usually in his office until he came to dinner. After dinner he went out on business and Olenka went into the office and kept the accounts and looked after the orders until evening.

"Timber is twenty per cent dearer than it was last

year," she told every one. "Do you know that Vassichka used to buy wood from the forests in this district, but now he has to go as far as the government of Mogilev every year. And what he pays to get it here!" she exclaimed, covering her eyes in horror.

She felt that she had been selling timber for years and that it was the most important thing in the world. There was something affectionate and touching in the very way she spoke of beams and posts and planks and laths and all the other forms of timber. She dreamed of whole mountains of planks and of endless streams of wagons dragging them far away. And she dreamed that a whole regiment of beams five vershoks wide and twelve arshins long stood up and marched against the timber-yard and that logs and beams and boards crashed against each other and that they were all falling down and getting up and piling themselves on top of each other. She cried out in her sleep, and Pustalov spoke to her tenderly.

"What's the matter, Olenka darling? Cross yourself."

Her husband's opinions were her opinions. She thought a room was too hot when he thought it was too hot and she thought business was dull when he thought it was dull. Pustalov did not like theatres and parties and when he stayed at home on holidays Olenka stayed with him.

"You are always either at home or in the office," her friends told her. "Why don't you ever go to the theatre and the circus, darling?"

"Vassichka and I have no time for the theatre," she

always answered. "We have no time for nonsense. What do you get out of going to a play?"

Olenka and Pustalov went to church on Saturday evening and on holidays they went early in the morning. They walked home side by side with pious faces and with an agreeable fragrance of soap and an agreeable rustle of silk. They drank tea with elaborate breads and jams and afterwards they had pastries. An appetizing odour floated out into the street from their kitchen every day at twelve o'clock, and they dined on cabbage soup and mutton or duck, or on fish if it were a fast-day. No one could pass their house without feeling hungry. The samovar was always boiling in the office and the customers were cheered up with tea and biscuits. Once a week they went to the baths and walked home together with red faces.

"We are getting on very well, thank God," Olenka said to her friends. "I wish every one were as comfortable as Vassichka and I."

She was dreadfully lonely when Pustalov went to buy his wood in the government of Mogilev and she cried all day and all night. They had let their lodgings to a veterinary surgeon called Smirnin, and sometimes he came to see her in the evenings and played cards with her. She liked talking to him while she was lonely and she was particularly interested in what he told her about his own life. He was married and he had a son, but he was separated from his wife because she had taken a lover and now he detested her and only sent her forty roubles a month because of their son. Olenka sighed and shook her head. She was sorry for him.

"Well, God help you," she said, as she lighted him out with a candle. "Thank you for coming in to cheer me up. May the Mother of God keep you."

She always spoke in her husband's solemn and dignified and judicious manner. And she always called out to the veterinary surgeon just as he was disappearing behind the door.

"You ought to forgive your wife for the sake of your son, Vladimir Platonich. You may be sure he understands all about it."

When Pustalov came back, she whispered to him about the veterinary surgeon and how unhappy he was with his wife, and both of them sighed and shook their heads and said that the boy must miss his father, and then they knelt before the holy ikons and prayed that God would send them children.

And so the Pustalovs passed six whole years in perfect love and harmony, and in peace and quiet. And then Vassili Andreich drank some very hot tea and went out into the yard without his hat. He caught a cold and although he had the best doctors he died four months later and Olenka was a widow again.

"Who will comfort me since you have left me, my dearest?" she sobbed after the funeral. "How can I live on without you? Pity my wretchedness and misery, good people, pity me, fatherless and motherless and all alone in the world!"

She hardly went out of her house except to church and to her husband's grave, and when she did go out she was dressed in the deepest mourning and covered with long veils. She lived like a nun for six months before she opened her shutters and left off her veils. She went

to market with her cook now and then, but people could only guess what was going on in her house when they saw her drinking tea with the veterinary surgeon in her garden while he read the newspaper to her and from a remark she made to one of her acquaintances in the post-office.

"The cattle are not properly inspected in our town, and that's why people are always catching diseases from the milk or from the cows and horses. Domestic animals should be looked after as carefully as human beings."

She said whatever the veterinary surgeon said, and people began to realize that she could never get through a year without being in love with some one, and that she had found an object in her own house. They would have been shocked if any one else had done such a thing, but Olenka did everything so much as matter of course that no one could ever be shocked by what she did. She and the veterinary surgeon never spoke of the change in their relations, but they could not conceal it. Olenka was quite unable to keep a secret, and when he had the men in his regiment to supper, she poured tea for them and talked all the time of cattle plagues and foot and mouth disease and municipal slaughter-houses. The veterinary surgeon was very much embarrassed, and when his guests were gone he always seized her hand and spoke to her furiously.

"Haven't I told you not to talk about matters you don't understand? When we doctors are discussing scientific matters among ourselves, please don't make a nuisance of yourself."

She was always surprised and dismayed.

"But, Volodichka," she asked, "what shall I talk about?"

And then she cried and put her arms around his neck and begged him not to be angry and they were both happy again.

But her happiness did not last. The veterinary surgeon went away with his regiment to some place as remote as Siberia and Olenka was left alone.

And this time she was quite alone. Her father had been dead so long that his old armchair stood in the attic on three legs and covered with dust. She became thinner and plainer, and when people met her in the street they did not smile at her as they did when she had some one to love. Her happy days were evidently over, and the new days were too painful to think about. She sat on her porch in the evening and heard the music in the Tivoli and the explosion of the fireworks, but she was not interested in them. She looked at her garden listlessly and she did not think of anything or want anything and when she went to bed she dreamed of her empty garden. And she seemed to eat and drink against her wishes.

And worse than all that, she had no opinions of any kind. She saw the objects and the actions about her, but she could not form any opinions about them, and she never had anything to talk about. She saw bottles and rain and peasants driving their carts, but for a thousand roubles she could not have said why bottles and rain should exist, or why peasants should drive their carts. Olenka had opinions about everything when she had Kukin and Pustalov and the veterinary surgeon, but now her heart and her brain were as empty as her garden, and

the emptiness was as bitter to her as wormwood in her mouth.

The town gradually grew in every direction. The Gipsy Road became a street and there were new streets and new houses where the timber-yard and the Tivoli had been. Time passes quickly. Olenka's house became shabby and the roof rusted and the shed sagged and docks and thistles overran the garden. Olenka was older and plainer and her soul was empty and dreary and bitter. She still sat on her back steps in summer and looked at the garden, and in winter she sat at her window and looked at the snow. When she felt a breath of spring or heard the sound of the cathedral bells her heart was warmed for a moment and she cried a little, and then the emptiness and the dreariness of life came over her again. Her black kitten rubbed against her and purred softly, but feline caresses were not what Olenka needed. She wanted a love that would absorb her whole being and that would give her ideas and a reason for living, and that would warm her aging blood. She shook the black kitten off her skirt.

"Go away! I don't want you here," she said angrily.

Day in and day out, year in and year out, she had no happiness and no ideas. She accepted whatever her cook happened to say.

One hot afternoon, just when the returning cows were filling the street and the garden with dust, some one knocked on her gate. Olenka opened it herself, and she was overcome when she saw the veterinary surgeon. His hair was grey, and he was in civilian clothes. She remembered everything when she saw him and she threw her arms around his neck and laid her head on his

shoulder and burst into tears. She was so overcome that she was unconscious all the time they were walking into the house and sitting down to tea.

"My dearest Vladimir Platonich," she murmured, trembling with joy, "how did God send you here?"

"I want to settle here, Olga Semyonova," he told her. "I have resigned from the army, and I want to try my luck on my own. And besides, my son is a big boy now, and he must go to school. My wife and I are living together again, you know."

"Where is she?" Olenka asked.

"She and the boy are at the hotel, and I am looking for lodgings."

"Good heavens, my dear. Why don't you take my house? I won't want any rent," Olenka cried in happy excitement, and wept again. "You can live here, and your old lodgings will do for me. Heavens, how delightful!"

The roof was painted the next day and all the walls were whitewashed and Olenka walked about the garden with her hands on her hips and gave directions. Her face was beaming with her old smile, and she looked as fresh as if she had just waked from a very long sleep. The veterinary surgeon's wife and son came in. His wife was thin and plain, and her hair was short and she looked bad-tempered. Little Sasha was ten years old and short for his age, but he was a plump boy with blue eyes and dimples. He ran after the cat as soon as he came into the garden, and he laughed happily as he ran.

"Is this your cat, auntie?" he asked Olenka. "When

she has kittens, do give us one. Mama is awfully afraid of mice."

Olenka talked to him and gave him tea, and her heart was as heavy and as happy as if he had been her own child.

And when he sat studying his lessons in the dining-room that evening, Olenka sat and looked at him tenderly and pityingly.

"What a pretty precious you are," she murmured to herself. "So pretty, and so clever."

"An island is a body of land entirely surrounded by water," he recited.

"An island is a body of land," she repeated. That was the first opinion she stated positively after all those years when she had no ideas and nothing to say.

She had plenty of opinions now, and at supper she talked to Sasha's father and mother about how difficult the studies were at the high school nowadays, but how much better the high school was than a commercial education, because you could choose any profession you liked after you had been through the high school, and you could be a doctor or an engineer or anything you liked.

Sasha began going to the high school. His mother went to stay with her sister in Kharkov and never came back and his father was away all day inspecting cattle and sometimes he did not come home for three days. Olenka felt that Sasha was quite abandoned, and that he was starving. So she took him to live with her and gave him a little room next to hers.

He had been living with her for six months, and every

morning she went into his room and found him sleeping quietly with one hand under his cheek. She could hardly bear to wake him.

"Sashenka," she said sadly, "you must get up and dress for school."

He dressed and said his prayers and then sat down and drank three glasses of tea and ate two large biscuits and half of a buttered roll. All this time he was so sleepy that he was rather cross.

"You don't quite know your fable, Sashenka," Olenka said, looking at him as if he were setting off on a long journey. "I have so much trouble with you. Try hard to learn, dearest, and obey your teachers."

"Please leave me alone," Sasha said.

Olenka followed him when he put on his big cap and took his satchel and walked down the street towards his school.

"Sashenka," she called.

He stopped, and she slipped a date or a caramel into his hand. When they came to the street where his school was he began to feel ashamed of being followed by a tall fat woman.

"You'd better go home, auntie," he said. "I can go the rest of the way by myself."

She stopped and gazed at him until he disappeared into the door of the school.

How she did love him! None of her other attachments had been so strong, and she had never given herself so happily or so unselfishly as she had done since her maternal instinct was roused. She would have given her life for this little boy with the dimples and the big cap,

and she would have cried joyfully while she was giving it. Why? Who knows why?

When she had seen Sasha into his school she walked home serenely and happily, radiating love. Her face had become young again in the last six months. She smiled and beamed and when people met her they looked at her with pleasure.

"Good morning, Olga Semyonova, darling. How are you getting on, darling?"

"The lessons at the high school are too difficult nowadays," she told the women at the market. "They have too much to do. Yesterday the first class had a fable to memorize and a Latin translation and a problem. You know that is too much for a little boy."

And she went on talking about the masters and the lessons and the books and she said just what Sasha said.

They had dinner together at three o'clock, and in the evening they studied the lessons together and Olenka and Sasha both cried over them. When she had put him to bed, she knelt by him a long time making the sign of the cross over him and whispering prayers. And when she went to bed herself she thought about what would happen after Sasha had finished his studies, after he had become a doctor or an engineer and had a house of his own and a carriage and a wife and children. She fell asleep thinking of him, and tears rolled down her cheeks from her closed eyes, and the black cat purred beside her.

And then sometimes there was a loud knock on the gate. Olenka always waked up breathless from fright

and from the violent beating of her heart. Half a minute later there was another knock.

"His mother has sent a telegram from Kharkov," she thought. "She wants Sasha sent to Kharkov. Oh God, have mercy!"

She was in despair. Her head and her hands and her feet turned cold, and she knew that she was the most unhappy creature in the world. But she heard voices after another minute and the veterinary surgeon came in from his club.

"Thank God!" she said.

And gradually the heaviness left her heart and she was happy again. She went back to bed thinking of Sasha who was fast asleep in the room next to hers.

Sometimes he called out in his sleep. "I'll give it to you! Go away! Stop talking to me!"

IX

If Gogol and Turgenev had not written the first stories that are truly Russian stories, Chekhov undoubtedly would not have found the road to his Russian perfection so short. But if he had written Gogol's Overcoat, which is becoming as inaccurately celebrated as The Necklace, he would not have brought the ghost of poor Akaky Akakyevich back to revenge himself by stripping court councillors of their overcoats—and if he had found any psychological or physiological reason for Akaky Akakyevich to die of losing his beautiful new overcoat and of the proper authorities' lack of interest in his loss, Chekhov would almost certainly have ended his story when a new clerk who was taller than Akaky Akakyevich sat in his seat and copied documents of state in letters that slanted more than Akaky Akakyevich's letters. And The Overcoat would have been a much better story and a much more Russian story. Tolstoi seems to have given himself and every one else a great deal more trouble about his style than Chekhov did, but no other Russian, so far as one may read them and judge them in the western languages, had the fastidiousness of a Racine or a Flaubert about words and the fastidiousness of a Mérimée or a Maupassant about form that Chekhov showed in his letters to Gorki and to the publisher Suvorin. If Conrad got very little for the inconvenience of being a Slav and Dostoevski got rather too much, Tolstoi and Chekhov got just enough—if Tol-

stoi got rather too much for a husband and a father, his genius and his beautifully scrupulous craftmanship made it just enough for a writer, and if Chekhov might have gotten rather too little, judging from his letters, his critical eye for his own defects and his own excellencies, and for the defects and the excellencies of Tolstoi and Turgenev and Dostoevski and Gorki and even of Bourget joined with the advantage of a doctor's exact knowledge and made it just enough.

Chekhov never spoke of Freud, so far as I know, though there is no reason why he should not have heard his theories, and his prose never suffered the blight of the Freudian vocabulary even in such a story as The Nervous Breakdown. But in one of his letters he said that no surgeon could dissect a human body without seeing that the mind was a part of the body and without seeing that there was no place for a soul, and in another letter he drew a diagram of the broken fall of the Russian spirit—of the extreme excitement, the feeling of guilt, and the exhaustion which are peculiarly Russian and which explain some of the Russian's difference from the unexcited German and the eternally and normally excited Frenchman. He knew the souls that his characters have in spite of the soul's organic improbability, and he knew when they were healthy souls and when they were unhealthy souls. But Olenka did not know that only what are called feminine women have no opinions of their own about bottles and rain and peasants in carts, and Olga Mihailovna, who slipped away from her husband's name-day party to think about the little creature who would be born in another two months did not know why she did not care when the little creature did not

come after all, and the spectacled little officer called Ryabovich who had sloping shoulders and whiskers like a lynx's did not know why he thought for two months of the house where he was accidentally kissed and then went to bed in his hut and refused to struggle against life's incomprehensible, aimless jests when he came back to the house again—and none of them knew whether his soul was healthy or unhealthy. That is, perhaps, the distinctive difference between the psychology of Chekhov and the psychoanalysis of all the Freudian primitives.

The stories of Lawrence and Joyce and Sherwood Anderson are far enough from being the mere charts of neurotic cases that Beresford and Ludovici and Rebecca West and May Sinclair sometimes write, but they do not often forget the modern Joseph who interprets all his dreams with due regard to his renunciation of Potiphar's wife. Lawrence's Gudruns and Ursulas and Hildas and Hermiones and Alvinas never forget him and Lawrence is the only one of the three geniuses among this generation of primitives who has publicly cried out that the unconscious is the soul and that the mysterious stream of consciousness is the stream which undermined his adolescence, but if that mysterious stream did not undermine the adolescence of Anderson and Joyce, the knowledge of the unconscious has flowed through it into the blood of every character they have created and it has assisted nature in denying all of them the grace of humour which is not often a quality of the poetic genius.

Anderson and Lawrence and Joyce are all primitives because none of them writes as the men who will always have known their unconscious will write. But Anderson is the only one of them who is Gothic—his genius is the

genius which could create tales that would become folklore in an age that had not learned the art of printing from movable type, or in an age that had forgotten it. Chekhov worked out his problems by arithmetic because they were problems for arithmetic and because he was a Russian, not because his father was born a serf, and Anderson works out his problems with hardly more than addition and subtraction because his problems are problems for addition and subtraction. When Anderson meets Chekhov on the neutral ground of German or even of French they may be alike, but in English they are alike only in a beautiful kindness towards their characters—a kindness that comes from belonging to the two nations which are at once the kindest and the cruellest in what is called the civilized world—and in a perfection of simplicity that leaves no one excellence projecting from the smooth edges of an extraordinary evenness of character, of style, and of theme. Anderson writes of the Ohio he has always known, and of the George Willards and Ray Pearsons and the boys who want to know why and the boys who know they are fools—of the men and the boys he has known, perhaps the men and the boys he has been. They are not very different, I suppose, from the men and the boys the other Mid-Americans write of; but Anderson is the only Mid-American writer who can be explained only by the possession of that extreme degree of human intelligence called genius, and he is the only one whose form is created by the knowledge that these people can not be looked at from the outside—that they must be allowed to write themselves down in their own virgin vulgarity unless they are seen through the very depths of another mind. He is Gothic in the

same way that Giotto was Gothic—Gothic with the discovery of the bones and sinews of the American mind and with the struggle of killing the smooth conventionalism of the story America inherited from England. A year or two ago he wrote the story of a man who was seen through the very depths of a doctor's mind—the story of a man who wanted one woman for a lifetime and another woman for a night, and he called it The Other Woman. Thirty years before Richard Harding Davis had written the story of a man who wanted one woman for a lifetime and another woman for a month, and he had called his story The Other Woman—Davis's young Latimer and his Ellen and his bishop are so many wax-works from the Eden Musée, and his America and Anderson's America look at each other across a stream wider than the unconscious and do not know each other. But the boys who want to know why and the boys who know they are fools know the boys who were created by Mark Twain, even across the stream of the unconscious and even though Mark Twain saw them only from outside even when they wrote themselves down.

Anderson is less admirably Gothic when he masses three words between the halves of an infinitive with something less than the deliberation and the elegance of Henry James, when he drops a heavy word into a phrase that will not bear its weight, when he writes the English *one* in a phrase where the familiar American *you* would be less perceptible, and when he speaks of Van Gogh and Picasso as if he had heard their names just as he was sitting down to write. When Lawrence speaks of Botticelli and Hippolytus he seems to have heard their

names yesterday or the day before, but Lawrence is romantic, and he is romantic because he gave grace and style and brilliance to the unconscious even though he is a snarling romantic. He tears dark secrets from the dark blood current of his lyrical creatures and throws them on his pages in a prose that is not often prose except in the manner of its printing. If some critic who found Women in Love sufficiently magnificent or sufficiently hideous to make such a research agreeable would count the number of similes and metaphors and synechdoches and metonymies in that mænadic tale, he would doubtless discover that Lawrence uses fewer unfigurative speeches than any other man who was ever called a prose writer. Everything in nature and out of nature looks like something else in or out of nature to him, and if an impressionist painter is a painter who reproduces the impression the external world has made on his spirit, Lawrence's stories are all impressionist paintings. A writer's similes are always a record of his life and what are called his allusions are always a record of his learning, but every story is not signed with the latitude and longitude of its creation as Lawrence's are—his phrases were always hot from his own unconscious, but his prose did not burst with the richness of seeds more pregnant than Annunzio's until he felt the blazing beauty of Italy, and it did not fade like a pomegranate broken from its stem until he left Italy for Australia and America.

Joyce is the same man in Dublin and in Trieste and in Paris, and Ulysses is Two Gallants and Grace and Ivy Day in the Committee Room and all of the other stories in Dubliners with a stethoscope held to the current of Celtic consciousness and reported in a language that jeers

at itself in its own mirror. He is classic because he is as Roman a Catholic as Thomas Aquinas, no matter what he believes or disbelieves—classic because everything that he knows has become part of what he has always known, what his fathers have known before him, and what his Church has always known and will know forever, even when his knowledge is the knowledge of Mallarmé and Cours la Reine and Goethe and nighttown with Bella Cohen looking like Minnie Hauck in Carmen. Whether the future of his method is art or science and whether or not even genius can hold a stethoscope to any consciousness except its own, only genius can hold a stethoscope even to its own consciousness; but Joyce is the only one of these primitives who has an erudition, a magnificence of intellect and a solemn subtle cleverness which could almost explain his stories without forcing his critics to fall helplessly back on the miracle of genius.

I'M A FOOL

BY SHERWOOD ANDERSON

It was a hard jolt for me, one of the most bitterest I ever had to face. And it all came about through my own foolishness, too. Even yet sometimes, when I think of it, I want to cry or swear or kick myself. Perhaps, even now, after all this time, there will be a kind of satisfaction in making myself look cheap by telling of it.

It began at three o'clock one October afternoon as I sat in the grand stand at the fall trotting and pacing meet at Sandusky, Ohio.

To tell the truth, I felt a little foolish that I should be sitting in the grand stand at all. During the summer before I had left my home town with Harry Whitehead, and, with a nigger named Burt, had taken a job as swipe with one of the two horses Harry was campaigning through the fall race meets that year. Mother cried and my sister Mildred, who wanted to get a job as a school teacher in our town that fall, stormed and scolded about the house all during the week before I left. They both thought it something disgraceful that one of our family should take a place as a swipe with race horses. I've an idea Mildred thought my taking the place would stand in the way of her getting the job she'd been working so long for.

But after all I had to work, and there was no other

work to be got. A big lumbering fellow of nineteen couldn't just hang around the house and I had got too big to mow people's lawns and sell newspapers. Little chaps who could get next to people's sympathies by their sizes were always getting jobs away from me. There was one fellow who kept saying to everyone who wanted a lawn mowed or a cistern cleaned, that he was saving money to work his way through college, and I used to lay awake nights thinking up ways to injure him without being found out. I kept thinking of wagons running over him and bricks falling on his head as he walked along the street. But never mind him.

I got the place with Harry and I liked Burt fine. We got along splendid together. He was a big nigger with a lazy sprawling body and soft, kind eyes, and when it came to a fight he could hit like Jack Johnson. He had Bucephalus, a big black pacing stallion that could do 2.09 or 2.10, if he had to, and I had a little gelding named Doctor Fritz that never lost a race all fall when Harry wanted him to win.

We set out from home late in July in a box car with the two horses and after that, until late November, we kept moving along to the race meets and the fairs. It was a peachy time for me, I'll say that. Sometimes now I think that boys who are raised regular in houses, and never have a fine nigger like Burt for best friend, and go to high schools and college, and never steal anything, or get drunk a little, or learn to swear from fellows who know how, or come walking up in front of a grand stand in their shirt sleeves and with dirty horsey pants on when the races are going on and the grand stand is full of people all dressed up— What's the use of talking about

it? Such fellows don't know nothing at all. They've never had no opportunity.

But I did. Burt taught me how to rub down a horse and put the bandages on after a race and steam a horse out and a lot of valuable things for any man to know. He could wrap a bandage on a horse's leg so smooth that if it had been the same color you would think it was his skin, and I guess he'd have been a big driver, too, and got to the top like Murphy and Walter Cox and the others if he hadn't been black.

Gee whiz, it was fun. You got to a county seat town, maybe say on a Saturday or Sunday, and the fair began the next Tuesday and lasted until Friday afternoon. Doctor Fritz would be, say in the 2.25 trot on Tuesday afternoon and on Thursday afternoon Bucephalus would knock 'em cold in the "free-for all" pace. It left you a lot of time to hang around and listen to horse talk, and see Burt knock some yap cold that got too gay, and you'd find out about horses and men and pick up a lot of stuff you could use all the rest of your life, if you had some sense and salted down what you heard and felt and saw.

And then at the end of the week when the race meet was over, and Harry had run home to tend up to his livery stable business, you and Burt hitched the two horses to carts and drove slow and steady across country, to the place for the next meeting, so as to not over-heat the horses, etc., etc., you know.

Gee whiz, Gosh amighty, the nice hickorynut and beechnut and oaks and other kinds of trees along the roads, all brown and red, and the good smells, and Burt singing a song that was called Deep River, and the country girls at the windows of houses and everything.

You can stick your colleges up your nose for all me. I guess I know where I got my education.

Why, one of those little burgs of towns you come to on the way, say now on a Saturday afternoon, and Burt says, "let's lay up here." And you did.

And you took the horses to a livery stable and fed them, and you got your good clothes out of a box and put them on.

And the town was full of farmers gaping, because they could see you were race horse people, and the kids maybe never see a nigger before and was afraid and run away when the two of us walked down their main street.

And that was before prohibition and all that foolishness, and so you went into a saloon, the two of you, and all the yaps come and stood around, and there was always someone pretended he was horsey and knew things and spoke up and began asking questions, and all you did was to lie and lie all you could about what horses you had, and I said I owned them, and then some fellow said "will you have a drink of whisky" and Burt knocked his eye out the way he could say, off-hand like, "Oh well, all right, I'm agreeable to a little nip. I'll split a quart with you." Gee whiz.

But that isn't what I want to tell my story about. We got home late in November and I promised mother I'd quit the race horses for good. There's a lot of things you've got to promise a mother because she don't know any better.

And so, there not being any work in our town any more than when I left there to go to the races, I went off to Sandusky and got a pretty good place taking care

of horses for a man who owned a teaming and delivery and storage and coal and real estate business there. It was a pretty good place with good eats, and a day off each week, and sleeping on a cot in a big barn, and mostly just shovelling in hay and oats to a lot of big good-enough skates of horses, that couldn't have trotted a race with a toad. I wasn't dissatisfied and I could send money home.

And then, as I started to tell you, the fall races come to Sandusky and I got the day off and I went. I left the job at noon and had on my good clothes and my new brown derby hat, I'd just bought the Saturday before, and a stand-up collar.

First of all I went down-town and walked about with the dudes. I've always thought to myself, "put up a good front" and so I did it. I had forty dollars in my pocket and so I went into the West House, a big hotel, and walked up to the cigar stand. "Give me three twenty-five cent cigars," I said. There was a lot of horsemen and strangers and dressed-up people from other towns standing around in the lobby and in the bar, and I mingled amongst them. In the bar there was a fellow with a cane and a Windsor tie on, that it made me sick to look at him. I like a man to be a man and dress up, but not to go put on that kind of airs. So I pushed him aside, kind of rough, and had me a drink of whisky. And then he looked at me, as though he thought maybe he'd get gay, but he changed his mind and didn't say anything. And then I had another drink of whisky, just to show him something, and went out and had a hack out to the races, all to myself, and when I got there I bought myself the best seat I could get up in the grand

stand, but didn't go in for any of these boxes. That's putting on too many airs.

And so there I was, sitting up in the grand stand as gay as you please and looking down on the swipes coming out with their horses, and with their dirty horsey pants on and the horse blankets swung over their shoulders, same as I had been doing all the year before. I liked one thing about the same as the other, sitting up there and feeling grand and being down there and looking up at the yaps and feeling grander and more important, too. One thing's about as good as another, if you take it just right. I've often said that.

Well, right in front of me, in the grand stand that day, there was a fellow with a couple of girls and they was about my age. The young fellow was a nice guy all right. He was the kind maybe that goes to college and then comes to be a lawyer or maybe a newspaper editor or something like that, but he wasn't stuck on himself. There are some of that kind are all right and he was one of the ones.

He had his sister with him and another girl and the sister looked around over his shoulder, accidental at first, not intending to start anything—she wasn't that kind—and her eyes and mine happened to meet.

You know how it is. Gee, she was a peach! She had on a soft dress, kind of a blue stuff and it looked carelessly made, but was well sewed and made and everything. I knew that much. I blushed when she looked right at me and so did she. She was the nicest girl I've ever seen in my life. She wasn't stuck on herself and she could talk proper grammar without being like a school teacher or something like that. What I mean

is, she was O. K. I think maybe her father was well-to-do, but not rich to make her chesty because she was his daughter, as some are. Maybe he owned a drug store or a drygoods store in their home town, or something like that. She never told me and I never asked.

My own people are all O. K. too, when you come to that. My grandfather was Welsh and over in the old country, in Wales he was— But never mind that.

The first heat of the first race come off and the young fellow setting there with the two girls left them and went down to make a bet. I knew what he was up to, but he didn't talk big and noisy and let everyone around know he was a sport, as some do. He wasn't that kind. Well, he come back and I heard him tell the two girls what horse he'd bet on, and when the heat was trotted they all half got to their feet and acted in the excited, sweaty way people do when they've got money down on a race, and the horse they bet on is up there pretty close at the end, and they think maybe he'll come on with a rush, but he never does because he hasn't got the old juice in him, come right down to it.

And then, pretty soon, the horses came out for the 2.18 pace and there was a horse in it I knew. He was a horse Bob French had in his string but Bob didn't own him. He was a horse owned by a Mr. Mathers down at Marietta, Ohio.

This Mr. Mathers had a lot of money and owned some coal mines or something, and he had a swell place out in the country, and he was stuck on race horses, but was a Presbyterian or something, and I think more than likely his wife was one, too, maybe a stiffer one than himself. So he never raced his horses hisself, and the

story round the Ohio race tracks was that when one of his horses got ready to go to the races he turned him over to Bob French and pretended to his wife he was sold.

So Bob had the horses and he did pretty much as he pleased and you can't blame Bob, at least, I never did. Sometimes he was out to win and sometimes he wasn't. I never cared much about that when I was swiping a horse. What I did want to know was that my horse had the speed and could go out in front, if you wanted him to.

And, as I'm telling you, there was Bob in this race with one of Mr. Mathers' horses, was named "About Ben Ahem" or something like that, and was fast as a streak. He was a gelding and had a mark of 2.21, but could step in .08 or .09

Because when Burt and I were out, as I've told you, the year before, there was a nigger, Burt knew, worked for Mr. Mathers and he went out there one day when we didn't have no race on at the Marietta Fair and our boss Harry was gone home.

And so everyone was gone to the fair but just this one nigger and he took us all through Mr. Mathers' swell house and he and Burt tapped a bottle of wine Mr. Mathers had hid in his bedroom, back in a closet, without his wife knowing, and he showed us this Ahem horse. Burt was always stuck on being a driver but didn't have much chance to get to the top, being a nigger, and he and the other nigger gulped that whole bottle of wine and Burt got a little lit up.

So the nigger let Burt take this About Ben Ahem and step him a mile in a track Mr. Mathers had all to

himself, right there on the farm. And Mr. Mathers had one child, a daughter, kinda sick and not very good looking, and she came home and we had to hustle and get About Ben Ahem stuck back in the barn.

I'm only telling you to get everything straight. At Sandusky, that afternoon I was at the fair, this young fellow with the two girls was fussed, being with the girls and losing his bet. You know how a fellow is that way. One of them was his girl and the other his sister. I had figured that out.

"Gee whiz," I says to myself, "I'm going to give him the dope."

He was mighty nice when I touched him on the shoulder. He and the girls were nice to me right from the start and clear to the end. I'm not blaming them.

And so he leaned back and I give him the dope on About Ben Ahem. "Don't bet a cent on this first heat because he'll go like an oxen hitched to a plow, but when the first heat is over go right down and lay on your pile." That's what I told him.

Well, I never saw a fellow treat any one sweller. There was a fat man sitting beside the little girl, that had looked at me twice by this time, and I at her, and both blushing, and what did he do but have the nerve to turn and ask the fat man to get up and change places with me so I could set with his crowd.

Gee whiz, craps amighty. There I was. What a chump I was to go and get gay up there in the West House bar, and just because that dude was standing there with a cane and that kind of a necktie on, to go

and get all balled up and drink that whisky, just to show off.

Of course she would know, me setting right beside her and letting her smell of my breath. I could have kicked myself right down out of that grand stand and all around that race track and made a faster record than most of the skates of horses they had there that year.

Because that girl wasn't any mutt of a girl. What wouldn't I have give right then for a stick of chewing gum to chew, or a lozenger, or some liquorice, or most anything. I was glad I had those twenty-five cent cigars in my pocket and right away I give that fellow one and lit one myself. Then that fat man got up and we changed places and there I was, plunked right down beside her.

They introduced themselves and the fellow's best girl, he had with him, was named Miss Elinor Woodbury, and her father was a manufacturer of barrels from a place called Tiffin, Ohio. And the fellow himself was named Wilbur Wessen and his sister was Miss Lucy Wessen.

I suppose it was their having such swell names got me off my trolley. A fellow, just because he has been a swipe with a race horse, and works taking care of horses for a man in the teaming, delivery, and storage business, isn't any better or worse than any one else. I've often thought that, and said it too.

But you know how a fellow is. There's something in that kind of nice clothes, and the kind of nice eyes she had, and the way she had looked at me, awhile before, over her brother's shoulder, and me looking back at her, and both of us blushing.

I couldn't show her up for a boob, could I?

I made a fool of myself, that's what I did. I said my name was Walter Mathers from Marietta, Ohio, and then I told all three of them the smashingest lie you ever heard. What I said was that my father owned the horse About Ben Ahem and that he had let him out to this Bob French for racing purposes, because our family was proud and had never gone into racing that way, in our own name, I mean. Then I had got started and they were all leaning over and listening, and Miss Lucy Wessen's eyes were shining, and I went the whole hog.

I told about our place down at Marietta, and about the big stables and the grand brick house we had on a hill, up above the Ohio River, but I knew enough not to do it in no bragging way. What I did was to start things and then let them drag the rest out of me. I acted just as reluctant to tell as I could. Our family hasn't got any barrel factory, and, since I've known us, we've always been pretty poor, but not asking anything of any one at that, and my grandfather, over in Wales—but never mind that.

We set there talking like we had known each other for years and years, and I went and told them that my father had been expecting maybe this Bob French wasn't on the square, and had sent me up to Sandusky on the sly to find out what I could.

And I bluffed it through I had found out all about the 2.18 pace, in which About Ben Ahem was to start.

I said he would lose the first heat by pacing like a lame cow and then he would come back and skin 'em alive after that. And to back up what I said I took thirty dollars out of my pocket and handed it to Mr. Wilbur

Wessen and asked him, would he mind, after the first heat, to go down and place it on About Ben Ahem for whatever odds he could get. What I said was that I didn't want Bob French to see me and none of the swipes.

Sure enough the first heat come off and About Ben Ahem went off his stride, up the back stretch, and looked like a wooden horse or a sick one, and come in to be last. Then this Wilbur Wessen went down to the betting place under the grand stand and there I was with the two girls, and when that Miss Woodbury was looking the other way once, Lucy Wessen kinda, with her shoulder you know, kinda touched me. Not just tucking down, I don't mean. You know how a woman can do. They get close, but not getting gay either. You know what they do. Gee whiz.

And then they give me a jolt. What they had done, when I didn't know, was to get together, and they had decided Wilbur Wessen would bet fifty dollars, and the two girls had gone and put in ten dollars each, of their own money, too. I was sick then, but I was sicker later.

About the gelding, About Ben Ahem, and their winning their money, I wasn't worried a lot about that. It come out O. K. Ahem stepped the next three heats like a bushel of spoiled eggs going to market before they could be found out, and Wilbur Wessen had got nine to two for the money. There was something else eating at me.

Because Wilbur come back, after he had bet the money, and after that he spent most of his time talking to that Miss Woodbury, and Lucy Wessen and I was

left alone together like on a desert island. Gee, if I'd only been on the square or if there had been any way of getting myself on the square. There ain't any Walter Mathers, like I said to her and them, and there hasn't ever been one, but if there was, I bet I'd go to Marietta, Ohio, and shoot him to-morrow.

There I was, big boob that I am. Pretty soon the race was over, and Wilbur had gone down and collected our money, and we had a hack down-town, and he stood us a swell supper at the West House, and a bottle of champagne beside.

And I was with that girl and she wasn't saying much, and I wasn't saying much either. One thing I know. She wasn't stuck on me because of the lie about my father being rich and all that. There's a way you know. . . . Craps amighty. There's a kind of girl, you see just once in your life, and if you don't get busy and make hay, then you're gone for good and all, and might as well go jump off a bridge. They give you a look from inside of them somewhere, and it ain't no vamping, and what it means is—you want that girl to be your wife, and you want nice things around her like flowers and swell clothes, and you want her to have the kids you're going to have, and you want good music played and no rag time. Gee whiz.

There's a place over near Sandusky, across a kind of bay, and it's called Cedar Point. And after we had supper we went over to it in a launch, all by ourselves. Wilbur and Miss Lucy and that Miss Woodbury had to catch a ten o'clock train back to Tiffin, Ohio, because, when you're out with girls like that you can't get care-

less and miss any trains and stay out all night, like you can with some kinds of Janes.

And Wilbur blowed himself to the launch and it cost him fifteen cold plunks, but I wouldn't never have knew if I hadn't listened. He wasn't no tin horn kind of a sport.

Over at the Cedar Point place, we didn't stay around where there was a gang of common kind of cattle at all.

There was big dance halls and dining places for yaps, and there was a beach you could walk along and get where it was dark, and we went there.

She didn't talk hardly at all and neither did I, and I was thinking how glad I was my mother was all right, and always made us kids learn to eat with a fork at table, and not swill soup, and not be noisy and rough like a gang you see around a race track that way.

Then Wilbur and his girl went away up the beach and Lucy and I sat down in a dark place, where there was some roots of old trees, the water had washed up, and after that the time, till we had to go back in the launch and they had to catch their train, wasn't nothing at all. It went like winking your eye.

Here's how it was. The place we were setting in was dark, like I said, and there was the roots from that old stump sticking up like arms, and there was a watery smell, and the night was like—as if you could put your hand out and feel it—so warm and soft and dark and sweet like an orange.

I most cried and I most swore and I most jumped up and danced, I was so mad and happy and sad.

When Wilbur come back from being alone with his

girl, and she saw him coming, Lucy she says, "we got to go to the train now," and she was most crying too, but she never knew nothing I knew, and she couldn't be so all busted up. And then, before Wilbur and Miss Woodbury got up to where we was, she put her face up and kissed me quick and put her head up against me and she was all quivering and—Gee whiz.

Sometimes I hope I have cancer and die. I guess you know what I mean. We went in the launch across the bay to the train like that, and it was dark too. She whispered and said it was like she and I could get out of the boat and walk on the water, and it sounded foolish, but I knew what she meant.

And then quick we were right at the depot, and there was a big gang of yaps, the kind that goes to the fairs, and crowded and milling around like cattle, and how could I tell her? "It won't be long because you'll write and I'll write to you." That's all she said.

I got a chance like a hay barn afire. A swell chance I got.

And maybe she would write me, down at Marietta that way, and the letter would come back, and stamped on the front of it by the U. S. A. "there ain't any such guy," or something like that, whatever they stamp on a letter that way.

And me trying to pass myself off for a big bug and a swell—to her, as decent a little body as God ever made. Craps amighty—a swell chance I got!

And then the train come in, and she got on it, and Wilbur Wessen he come and shook hands with me, and that Miss Woodbury was nice too and bowed to

me, and I at her, and the train went and I busted out and cried like a kid.

Gee, I could have run after that train and made Dan Patch look like a freight train after a wreck but, socks amighty, what was the use? Did you ever see such a fool?

I'll bet you what—if I had an arm broke right now or a train had run over my foot—I wouldn't go to no doctor at all. I'd go set down and let her hurt and hurt—that's what I'd do.

I'll bet you what—if I hadn't a drunk that booze I'd a never been such a boob as to go tell such a lie—that couldn't never be made straight to a lady like her.

I wish I had that fellow right here that had on a Windsor tie and carried a cane. I'd smash him for fair. Gosh darn his eyes. He's a big fool—that's what he is.

And if I'm not another you just go find me one and I'll quit working and be a bum and give him my job. I don't care nothing for working, and earning money, and saving it for no such boob as myself.

THE SHADES OF SPRING

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

I

It was a mile nearer through the wood. Mechanically, Syson turned up by the forge and lifted the field-gate. The blacksmith and his mate stood still, watching the trespasser. But Syson looked too much a gentleman to be accosted. They let him go on in silence across the small field to the wood.

There was not the least difference between this morning and those of the bright springs, six or eight years back. White and sandy-gold fowls still scratched round the gate, littering the earth and the field with feathers and scratched-up rubbish. Between the two thick holly bushes in the wood-hedge was the hidden gap, whose fence one climbed to get into the wood; the bars were scored just the same by the keeper's boots. He was back in the eternal.

Syson was extraordinarily glad. Like an uneasy spirit he had returned to the country of his past, and he found it waiting for him, unaltered. The hazel still spread glad little hands downwards, the bluebells here were still wan and few, among the lush grass and in the shade of the bushes.

The path through the wood, on the very brow of a slope, ran winding easily for a time. All around were twiggy oaks, just issuing their gold, and floor spaces diapered with woodruff, with patches of dog-mercury

and tufts of hyacinth. Two fallen trees still lay across the track. Syson jolted down a steep, rough slope, and came again upon the open land, this time looking north as through a great window in the wood. He stayed to gaze over the level fields of the hilltop, at the village which strewed the bare upland as if it had tumbled off the passing wagons of industry, and been forsaken. There was a stiff, modern, grey little church, and blocks and rows of red dwellings lying at random; at the back, the twinkling headstocks of the pit, and the looming pit-hill. All was naked and out-of-doors, not a tree! It was quite unaltered.

Syson turned, satisfied, to follow the path that sheered downhill into the wood. He was curiously elated, feeling himself back in an enduring vision. He started. A keeper was standing a few yards in front, barring the way.

"Where might you be going this road, sir?" asked the man. The tone of his question had a challenging twang. Syson looked at the fellow with an impersonal, observant gaze. It was a young man of four or five and twenty, ruddy and well favoured. His dark blue eyes now stared aggressively at the intruder. His black moustache, very thick, was cropped short over a small, rather soft mouth. In every other respect the fellow was manly and good-looking. He stood just above middle height; the strong forward thrust of his chest, and the perfect ease of his erect, self-sufficient body, gave one the feeling that he was taut with animal life, like the thick jet of a fountain balanced in itself. He stood with the butt of his gun on the ground, looking uncertainly and questioningly at Syson. The dark, restless eyes of the

trespasser, examining the man and penetrating into him without heeding his office, troubled the keeper and made him flush.

"Where is Naylor? Have you got his job?" Syson asked.

"You're not from the House, are you?" inquired the keeper. It could not be, since everyone was away.

"No, I'm not from the House," the other replied. It seemed to amuse him.

"Then might I ask where you were making for?" said the keeper, nettled.

"Where I am making for?" Syson repeated. "I am going to Willey-Water Farm."

"This isn't the road."

"I think so. Down this path, past the well, and out by the white gate."

"But that's not the public road."

"I suppose not. I used to come so often, in Naylor's time, I had forgotten. Where is he, by the way?"

"Crippled with rheumatism," the keeper answered reluctantly.

"Is he?" Syson exclaimed in pain.

"And who might you be?" asked the keeper, with a new intonation.

"John Adderley Syson; I used to live in Cordy Lane."

"Used to court Hilda Millership?"

Syson's eyes opened with a pained smile. He nodded. There was an awkward silence.

"And you—who are you?" asked Syson.

"Arthur Pilbeam—Naylor's my uncle," said the other.

"You live here in Nuttall?"

"I'm lodgin' at my uncle's—at Naylor's."

"I see!"

"Did you say you was goin' down to Willey-Water?" asked the keeper.

"Yes."

There was a pause of some moments, before the keeper blurted: *"I'm* courtin' Hilda Millership."

The young fellow looked at the intruder with a stubborn defiance, almost pathetic. Syson opened new eyes.

"Are you?" he said, astonished. The keeper flushed dark.

"She and me are keeping company," he said.

"I didn't know!" said Syson. The other man waited uncomfortably.

"What, is the thing settled?" asked the intruder.

"How, settled?" retorted the other sulkily.

"Are you going to get married soon, and all that?"

The keeper stared in silence for some moments, impotent.

"I suppose so," he said, full of resentment.

"Ah!" Syson watched closely.

"I'm married myself," he added, after a time.

"You are?" said the other incredulously.

Syson laughed in his brilliant, unhappy way.

"This last fifteen months," he said.

The keeper gazed at him with wide, wondering eyes, apparently thinking back, and trying to make things out.

"Why, didn't you know?" asked Syson.

"No, I didn't," said the other sulkily.

There was silence for a moment.

"Ah well!" said Syson. "I will go on. I suppose I may." The keeper stood in silent opposition. The two men hesitated in the open, grassy space, set round

with small sheaves of sturdy bluebells; a little open platform on the brow of the hill. Syson took a few indecisive steps forward, then stopped.

"I say, how beautiful!" he cried.

He had come in full view of the downslope. The wide path ran from his feet like a river, and it was full of bluebells, save for a green winding thread down the centre, where the keeper walked. Like a stream the path opened into azure shallows at the levels, and there were pools of bluebells, with still the green thread winding through, like a thin current of ice-water through blue lakes. And from under the twig-purple of the bushes swam the shadowed blue, as if the flowers lay in flood water over the woodland.

"Ah, isn't it lovely!" Syson exclaimed; this was his past, the country he had abandoned, and it hurt him to see it so beautiful. Wood-pigeons cooed overhead, and the air was full of the brightness of birds singing.

"If you're married, what do you keep writing to her for, and sending her poetry books and things?" asked the keeper. Syson stared at him, taken aback and humiliated. Then he began to smile.

"Well," he said, "I did not know about you. . . ."

Again the keeper flushed darkly.

"But if you are married—" he charged.

"I am," answered the other cynically.

Then, looking down the blue, beautiful path, Syson felt his own humiliation. "What right *have* I to hang on to her?" he thought, bitterly self-contemptuous.

"She knows I'm married and all that," he said.

"But you keep sending her books," challenged the keeper.

Syson, silenced, looked at the other man quizzically, half pitying. Then he turned.

"Good day," he said, and was gone. Now, everything irritated him: the two sallows, one all gold and perfume and murmur, one silver-green and bristly, reminded him, that here he had taught her about pollination. What a fool he was! What god-forsaken folly it all was!

"Ah well," he said to himself; "the poor devil seems to have a grudge against me. I'll do my best for him." He grinned to himself, in a very bad temper.

II

The farm was less than a hundred yards from the wood's edge. The wall of trees formed the fourth side to the open quadrangle. The house faced the wood. With tangled emotions Syson noted the plum blossom falling on the profuse, coloured primroses, which he himself had brought here and set. How they had increased! There were thick tufts of scarlet, and pink, and pale purple primroses under the plum trees. He saw somebody glance at him through the kitchen window, heard men's voices.

The door opened suddenly: very womanly she had grown! He felt himself going pale.

"You?—Addy!" she exclaimed, and stood motionless.

"Who?" called the farmer's voice. Men's low voices answered. Those low voices, curious and almost jeering, roused the tormented spirit in the visitor. Smiling brilliantly at her, he waited.

"Myself—why not?" he said.

The flush burned very deep on her cheek and throat.

"We are just finishing dinner," she said.

"Then I will stay outside." He made a motion to show that he would sit on the red earthenware pipkin that stood near the door among the daffodils, and contained the drinking water.

"Oh no, come in," she said hurriedly. He followed her. In the doorway, he glanced swiftly over the family, and bowed. Everyone was confused. The farmer, his wife, and the four sons sat at the coarsely laid dinner-table, the men with arms bare to the elbows.

"I am sorry I come at lunch-time," said Syson.

"Hello, Addy!" said the farmer, assuming the old form of address, but his tone cold. "How are you?"

And he shook hands.

"Shall you have a bit?" he invited the young visitor, but taking for granted the offer would be refused. He assumed that Syson was become too refined to eat so roughly. The young man winced at the imputation.

"Have you had any dinner?" asked the daughter.

"No," replied Syson. "It is too early. I shall be back at half-past one."

"You call it lunch, don't you?" asked the eldest son, almost ironical. He had once been an intimate friend of this young man.

"We'll give Addy something when we've finished," said the mother, an invalid, deprecating.

"No—don't trouble. I don't want to give you any trouble," said Syson.

"You could allus live on fresh air an' scenery," laughed the youngest son, a lad of nineteen.

Syson went round the buildings, and into the orchard

at the back of the house, where daffodils all along the hedgerow swung like yellow, ruffled birds on their perches. He loved the place extraordinarily, the hills ranging round, with bear-skin woods covering their giant shoulders, and small red farms like brooches clasping their garments; the blue streak of water in the valley, the bareness of the home pasture, the sound of myriad-threaded bird-singing, which went mostly unheard. To his last day, he would dream of this place, when he felt the sun on his face, or he saw the small handfuls of snow between the winter twigs, or smelt the coming of spring.

Hilda was very womanly. In her presence he felt constrained. She was twenty-nine, as he was, but she seemed to him much older. He felt foolish, almost unreal, beside her. She was so static. As he was fingering some shed plum blossom on a low bough, she came to the back door to shake the tablecloth. Fowls raced from the stackyard, birds rustled from the trees. Her dark hair was gathered up in a coil like a crown on her head. She was very straight, distant in her bearing. As she folded the cloth, she looked away over the hills.

Presently Syson returned indoors. She had prepared eggs and curd cheese, stewed gooseberries and cream.

"Since you will dine to-night," she said, "I have only given you a light lunch."

"It is awfully nice," he said. "You keep a real idyllic atmosphere—your belt of straw and ivy buds."

Still they hurt each other.

He was uneasy before her. Her brief, sure speech, her distant bearing, were unfamiliar to him. He admired again her grey-black eyebrows, and her lashes.

Their eyes met. He saw, in the beautiful grey and black of her glance, tears and a strange light, and at the back of all, calm acceptance of herself, and triumph over him.

He felt himself shrinking. With an effort he kept up the ironic manner.

She sent him into the parlour while she washed the dishes. The long low room was refurnished from the Abbey sale, with chairs upholstered in claret-coloured rep, many years old, and an oval table of polished walnut, and another piano, handsome, though still antique. In spite of the strangeness, he was pleased. Opening a high cupboard let into the thickness of the wall, he found it full of his books, his old lesson-books, and volumes of verse he had sent her, English and German. The daffodils in the white window-bottoms shone across the room, he could almost feel their rays. The old glamour caught him again. His youthful water-colours on the wall no longer made him grin; he remembered how fervently he had tried to paint for her, twelve years before.

She entered, wiping a dish, and he saw again the bright, kernel-white beauty of her arms.

"You are quite splendid here," he said, and their eyes met.

"Do you like it?" she asked. It was the old, low, husky tone of intimacy. He felt a quick change beginning in his blood. It was the old, delicious sublimation, the thinning, almost the vaporizing of himself, as if his spirit were to be liberated.

"Aye," he nodded, smiling at her like a boy again. She bowed her head.

"This was the countess's chair," she said in low tones.

"I found her scissors down here between the padding."

"Did you? Where are they?"

Quickly, with a lilt in her movement, she fetched her work-basket, and together they examined the long-shanked old scissors.

"I knew you could use them," she said, with certainty. He looked at his fingers, and at the scissors. She meant his fingers were fine enough for the small-looped scissors.

"That is something to be said for me," he laughed, putting the scissors aside. She turned to the window. He noticed the fine, fair down on her cheek and her upper lip, and her soft, white neck, like the throat of a nettle flower, and her fore-arms, bright as newly blanched kernels. He was looking at her with new eyes, and she was a different person to him. He did not know her. But he could regard her objectively now.

"Shall we go out awhile?" she asked.

"Yes!" he answered. But the predominant emotion, that troubled the excitement and perplexity of his heart, was fear, fear of that which he saw. There was about her the same manner, the same intonation in her voice, now as then, but she was not what he had known her to be. He knew quite well what she had been for him. And gradually he was realizing that she was something quite other, and always had been.

She put no covering on her head, merely took off her apron, saying, "We will go by the larches." As they passed the old orchard, she called him in to show him a blue-tit's nest in one of the apple trees, and a sycock's in the hedge. He rather wondered at her surety, at a certain hardness like arrogance hidden under her humility.

"Look at the apple buds," she said, and he then per-

ceived myriads of little scarlet balls among the drooping boughs. Watching his face, her eyes went hard. She saw the scales were fallen from him, and at last he was going to see her as she was. It was the thing she had most dreaded in the past, and most needed, for her soul's sake. Now he was going to see her as she was. He would not love her, and he would know he never could have loved her. The old illusion gone, they were strangers, crude and entire. But he would give her her due—she would have her due from him.

She was brilliant as he had not known her. She showed him nests: a jenny wren's in a low bush.

"See this jinty's!" she exclaimed.

He was surprised to hear her use the local name. She reached carefully through the thorns, and put her finger in the nest's round door.

"Five!" she said. "Tiny little things."

She showed him nests of robins, and chaffinches, and linnets, and buntings; of a wagtail beside the water.

"And if we go down, nearer the lake, I will show you a kingfisher's. . . ."

"Among the young fir-trees," she said, "there's a throstle's or a blackie's on nearly every bough, every ledge. The first day, when I had seen them all, I felt as if I mustn't go in the wood. It seemed a city of birds: and in the morning, hearing them all, I thought of the noisy early markets. I was afraid to go in my own wood."

She was using the language they had both of them invented. Now it was all her own. He had done with it. She did not mind his silence, but was always dominant, letting him see her wood. As they came along a

marshy path where forget-me-nots were opening in a rich blue drift: "We know all the birds, but there are many flowers we can't find out," she said. It was half an appeal to him, who had known the names of things.

She looked dreamily across to the open fields that slept in the sun.

"I have a lover as well, you know," she said, with assurance, yet dropping again almost into the intimate tone.

This woke in him the spirit to fight her.

"I think I met him. He is good-looking—also in Arcady."

Without answering, she turned into a dark path that led up-hill, where the trees and undergrowth were very thick.

"They did well," she said at length, "to have various altars to various gods, in old days."

"Ah yes!" he agreed. "To whom is the new one?"

"There are no old ones," she said. "I was always looking for this."

"And whose is it?" he asked.

"I don't know," she said, looking full at him.

"I'm very glad, for your sake," he said, "that you are satisfied."

"Aye—but the man doesn't matter so much," she said. There was a pause.

"No!" he exclaimed, astonished, yet recognizing her as her real self.

"It is one's self that matters," she said. "Whether one is being one's own self and serving one's own God."

There was silence, during which he pondered. The path was almost flowerless, gloomy. At the side, his heels sank into soft clay.

III

"I," she said, very slowly, "I was married the same night as you."

He looked at her.

"Not legally, of course," she replied. "But—actually."

"To the keeper?" he said, not knowing what else to say.

She turned to him.

"You thought I could not?" she said. But the flush was deep in her cheek and throat, for all her assurance.

Still he would not say anything.

"You see"—she was making an effort to explain—"*I* had to understand also."

"And what does it amount to, this *understanding?*" he asked.

"A very great deal—does it not to you?" she replied. "One is free."

"And you are not disappointed?"

"Far from it!" Her tone was deep and sincere.

"You love him?"

"Yes, I love him."

"Good!" he said.

This silenced her for a while.

"Here, among his things, I love him," she said.

His conceit would not let him be silent.

"It needs this setting?" he asked.

"It does," she cried. "You are always making me to be not myself."

He laughed shortly.

"But is it a matter of surroundings?" he said. He had considered her all spirit.

"I am like a plant," she replied. "I can only grow in my own soil."

They came to a place where the undergrowth shrank away, leaving a bare, brown space, pillared with the brick-red and purplish trunks of pine trees. On the fringe, hung the sombre green of elder trees, with flat flowers in bud, and below were bright, unfurling pennons of fern. In the midst of the bare space stood a keeper's log hut. Pheasant-coops were lying about, some occupied by a clucking hen, some empty.

Hilda walked over the brown pine-needles to the hut, took a key from among the eaves, and opened the door. It was a bare wooden place with a carpenter's bench and form, carpenter's tools, an axe, snares, traps, some skins pegged down, everything in order. Hilda closed the door. Syson examined the weird flat coats of wild animals, that were pegged down to be cured. She turned some knotch in the side wall, and disclosed a second, small apartment.

"How romantic!" said Syson.

"Yes. He is very curious—he has some of a wild animal's cunning—in a nice sense—and he is inventive, and thoughtful—but not beyond a certain point."

She pulled back a dark green curtain. The apartment was occupied almost entirely by a large couch of heather and bracken, on which was spread an ample rabbit-skin rug. On the floor were patchwork rugs of cat-skin, and a red calf-skin, while hanging from the wall were other furs. Hilda took down one, which she put on. It was a cloak of rabbit-skin and of white fur, with a hood,

apparently of the skins of stoats. She laughed at Syson from out of this barbaric mantle, saying:

"What do you think of it?"

"Ah—! I congratulate you on your man," he replied.

"And look!" she said.

In a little jar on a shelf were some sprays, frail and white, of the first honeysuckle.

"They will scent the place at night," she said.

He looked round curiously.

"Where does he come short, then?" he asked. She gazed at him for a few moments. Then, turning aside:

"The stars aren't the same with him," she said. "You could make them flash and quiver, and the forget-me-nots come up at me like phosphorescence. You could make things *wonderful.* I have found it out—it is true. But I have them all for myself, now."

He laughed, saying:

"After all, stars and forget-me-nots are only luxuries. You ought to make poetry."

"Aye," she assented. "But I have them all now."

Again he laughed bitterly at her.

She turned swiftly. He was leaning against the small window of the tiny, obscure room, and was watching her, who stood in the doorway, still cloaked in her mantle. His cap was removed, so she saw his face and head distinctly in the dim room. His black, straight, glossy hair was brushed clean back from his brow. His black eyes were watching her, and his face, that was clear and cream, and perfectly smooth, was flickering.

"We are very different," she said bitterly.

Again he laughed.

"I see you disapprove of me," he said.

"I disapprove of what you have become," she said.

"You think we might"—he glanced at the hut—"have been like this—you and I?"

She shook her head.

"You! no; never! You plucked a thing and looked at it till you had found out all you wanted to know about it, then you threw it away," she said.

"Did I?" he asked. "And could your way never have been my way? I suppose not."

"Why should it?" she said. "I am a separate being."

"But surely two people sometimes go the same way," he said.

"You took me away from myself," she said.

He knew he had mistaken her, had taken her for something she was not. That was his fault, not hers.

"And did you always know?" he asked.

"No—you never let me know. You bullied me. I couldn't help myself. I was glad when you left me, really."

"I know you were," he said. But his face went paler, almost deathly luminous.

"Yet," he said, "it was you who sent me the way I have gone.

"I!" she exclaimed, in pride.

"You *would* have me take the Grammar School scholarship—and you would have me foster poor little Botell's fervent attachment to me, till he couldn't live without me—and because Botell was rich and influential. You triumphed in the wine-merchant's offer to send me to Cambridge, to befriend his only child. You wanted me to rise in the world. And all the time you

were sending me away from you—every new success of mine put a separation between us, and more for you than for me. You never wanted to come with me: you wanted just to send me to see what it was like. I believe you even wanted me to marry a lady. You wanted to triumph over society in me."

"And I am responsible," she said, with sarcasm.

"I distinguished myself to satisfy you," he replied.

"Ah!" she cried, "you always wanted change, change, like a child."

"Very well! And I am a success, and I know it, and I do some good work. But—I thought you were different. What right have you to a man?"

"What do you want?" she said, looking at him with wide, fearful eyes.

He looked back at her, his eyes pointed, like weapons.

"Why, nothing," he laughed shortly.

There was a rattling at the outer latch, and the keeper entered. The woman glanced round, but remained standing, fur-cloaked, in the inner doorway. Syson did not move.

The other man entered, saw, and turned away without speaking. The two also were silent.

Pilbeam attended to his skins.

"I must go," said Syson.

"Yes," she replied.

"Then I give you 'To our vast and varying fortunes.' " He lifted his hand in pledge.

" 'To our vast and varying fortunes,' " she answered gravely, and speaking in cold tones.

"Arthur!' she said.

The keeper pretended not to hear. Syson, watching

keenly, began to smile. The woman drew herself up.

"Arthur!" she said again, with a curious upward inflection, which warned the two men that her soul was trembling on a dangerous crisis.

The keeper slowly put down his tool and came to her.

"Yes," he said.

"I wanted to introduce you," she said, trembling.

"I've met him a'ready," said the keeper.

"Have you? It is Addy, Mr. Syson, whom you know about.—This is Arthur, Mr. Pilbeam," she added, turning to Syson. The latter held out his hand to the keeper, and they shook hands in silence.

"I'm glad to have met you," said Syson. "We drop our correspondence, Hilda?"

"Why need we?" she asked.

The two men stood at a loss.

"*Is* there no need?" said Syson.

Still she was silent.

"It is as you will," she said.

They went all three together down the gloomy path.

" 'Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et grand l'espoir,' " quoted Syson, not knowing what to say.

"What do you mean?" she said. "Besides, *we* can't walk in *our* wild oats—we never sowed any."

Syson looked at her. He was startled to see his young love, his nun, his Botticelli angel, so revealed. It was he who had been the fool. He and she were more separate than any two strangers could be. She only wanted to keep up a correspondence with him—and he, of course, wanted it kept up, so that he could write to her, like Dante to some Beatrice who had never existed save in the man's own brain.

At the bottom of the path she left him. He went along with the keeper, towards the open, towards the gate that closed on the wood. The two men walked almost like friends. They did not broach the subject of their thoughts.

Instead of going straight to the high-road gate, Syson went along the wood's edge, where the brook spread out in a little bog, and under the alder trees, among the reeds, great yellow stools and bosses of marigolds shone. Threads of brown water trickled by, touched with gold from the flowers. Suddenly there was a blue flash in the air, as a kingfisher passed.

Syson was extraordinarily moved. He climbed the bank to the gorse bushes, whose sparks of blossom had not yet gathered into a flame. Lying on the dry brown turf, he discovered sprigs of tiny purple milkwort and pink spots of lousewort. What a wonderful world it was—marvellous, for ever new. He felt as if it were underground, like the fields of monotone hell, notwithstanding. Inside his breast was a pain like a wound. He remembered the poem of William Morris, where in the Chapel of Lyonesse a knight lay wounded, with the truncheon of a spear deep in his breast, lying always as dead, yet did not die, while day after day the coloured sunlight dipped from the painted window across the chancel, and passed away. He knew now it never had been true, that which was between him and her, not for a moment. The truth had stood apart all the time.

Syson turned over. The air was full of the sound of larks, as if the sunshine above were condensing and

falling in a shower. Amid this bright sound, voices sounded small and distinct.

"But if he's married, an' quite willing to drop it off, what has ter against it?" said the man's voice.

"I don't want to talk about it now. I want to be alone."

Syson looked through the bushes. Hilda was standing in the wood, near the gate. The man was in the field, loitering by the hedge, and playing with the bees as they settled on the white bramble flowers.

There was silence for a while, in which Syson imagined her will among the brightness of the larks. Suddenly the keeper exclaimed "Ah!" and swore. He was gripping at the sleeve of his coat, near the shoulder. Then he pulled off his jacket, threw it on the ground, and absorbedly rolled up his shirt sleeve right to the shoulder.

"Ah!" he said vindictively, as he picked out the bee and flung it away. He twisted his fine, bright arm, peering awkwardly over his shoulder.

"What is it?" asked Hilda.

"A bee—crawled up my sleeve," he answered.

"Come here to me," she said.

The keeper went to her, like a sulky boy. She took his arm in her hands.

"Here it is—and the sting left in—poor bee!"

She picked out the sting, put her mouth to his arm, and sucked away the drop of poison. As she looked at the red mark her mouth had made, and at his arm, she said, laughing:

"That is the reddest kiss you will ever have."

When Syson next looked up, at the sound of voices,

he saw in the shadow the keeper with his mouth on the throat of his beloved, whose head was thrown back, and whose hair had fallen, so that one rough rope of dark brown hair hung across his bare arm.

"No," the woman answered. "I am not upset because he's gone. You won't understand. . . ."

Syson could not distinguish what the man said. Hilda replied, clear and distinct:

"You know I love you. He has gone quite out of my life—don't trouble about him. . . ." He kissed her, murmuring. She laughed hollowly.

"Yes," she said, indulgent. "We will be married, we will be married. But not just yet." He spoke to her again. Syson heard nothing for a time. Then she said:

"You must go home, now, dear—you will get no sleep."

Again was heard the murmur of the keeper's voice, troubled by fear and passion.

"But why should we be married at once?" she said. "What more would you have, by being married? It is most beautiful as it is."

At last he pulled on his coat and departed. She stood at the gate, not watching him, but looking over the sunny country.

When at last she had gone, Syson also departed going back to town.

IVY DAY IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM

BY JAMES JOYCE

Old Jack raked the cinders together with a piece of cardboard and spread them judiciously over the whitening dome of coals. When the dome was thinly covered his face lapsed into darkness but, as he set himself to fan the fire again, his crouching shadow ascended the opposite wall and his face slowly re-emerged into light. It was an old man's face, very bony and hairy. The moist blue eyes blinked at the fire and the moist mouth fell open at times, munching once or twice mechanically when it closed. When the cinders had caught he laid the piece of cardboard against the wall, sighed and said:

"That's better now, Mr. O'Connor."

Mr. O'Connor, a grey-haired young man, whose face was disfigured by many blotches and pimples, had just brought the tobacco for a cigarette into a shapely cylinder but when spoken to he undid his handiwork meditatively. Then he began to roll the tobacco again meditatively and after a moment's thought decided to lick the paper.

"Did Mr. Tierney say when he'd be back?" he asked in a husky falsetto.

"He didn't say."

Mr. O'Connor put his cigarette into his mouth and began to search his pockets. He took out a pack of thin pasteboard cards.

"I'll get you a match," said the old man.

"Never mind, this'll do," said Mr. O'Connor.

He selected one of the cards and read what was printed on it:

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

ROYAL EXCHANGE WARD

Mr. Richard J. Tierney, P. L. G., respectfully solicits the favour of your vote and influence at the coming election in the Royal Exchange Ward.

Mr. O'Connor had been engaged by Tierney's agent to canvass one part of the ward but, as the weather was inclement and his boots let in the wet, he spent a great part of the day sitting by the fire in the Committee Room in Wicklow Street with Jack, the old caretaker. They had been sitting thus since the short day had grown dark. It was the sixth of October, dismal and cold out of doors.

Mr. O'Connor tore a strip off the card and, lighting it, lit his cigarette. As he did so the flame lit up a leaf of dark glossy ivy in the lapel of his coat. The old man watched him attentively and then, taking up the piece of cardboard again, began to fan the fire slowly while his companion smoked.

"Ah, yes," he said, continuing, "it's hard to know what way to bring up children. Now who'd think he'd turn out like that! I sent him to the Christian Brothers and I done what I could for him, and there he goes boosing about. I tried to make him someway decent."

He replaced the cardboard wearily.

"Only I'm an old man now I'd change his tune for

him. I'd take the stick to his back and beat him while I could stand over him—as I done many a time before. The mother, you know, she cocks him up with this and that. . . ."

"That's what ruins children," said Mr. O'Connor.

"To be sure it is," said the old man. "And little thanks you get for it, only impudence. He takes th' upper hand of me whenever he sees I've a sup taken. What's the world coming to when sons speaks that way to their fathers?"

"What age is he?" said Mr. O'Connor.

"Nineteen," said the old man.

"Why don't you put him to something?"

"Sure, amn't I never done at the drunken bowsy ever since he left school? 'I won't keep you,' I says. 'You must get a job for yourself.' But, sure, it's worse when ever he gets a job; he drinks it all."

Mr. O'Connor shook his head in sympathy, and the old man fell silent, gazing into the fire. Someone opened the door of the room and called out:

"Hello! Is this a Freemason's meeting?"

"Who's that?" said the old man.

"What are you doing in the dark?" asked a voice.

"Is that you, Hynes?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"Yes. What are you doing in the dark?" said Mr. Hynes, advancing into the light of the fire.

He was a tall, slender young man with a light brown moustache. Imminent little drops of rain hung at the brim of his hat and the collar of his jacket-coat was turned up.

"Well, Mat," he said to Mr. O'Connor, "how goes it?"

Mr. O'Connor shook his head. The old man left the hearth, and after stumbling about the room returned with two candlesticks which he thrust one after the other into the fire and carried to the table. A denuded room came ino view and the fire lost all its cheerful colour. The walls of the room were bare except for a copy of an election address. In the middle of the room was a small table on which papers were heaped.

Mr. Hynes leaned against the mantelpiece and asked:

"Has he paid you yet?"

"Not yet," said Mr. O'Connor. "I hope to God he'll not leave us in the lurch to-night."

Mr. Hynes laughed.

"O, he'll pay you. Never fear," he said.

"I hope he'll look smart about it if he means business," said Mr. O'Connor.

"What do you think, Jack?" said Mr. Hynes satirically to the old man.

The old man returned to his seat by the fire, saying:

"It isn't but he has it, anyway. Not like the other tinker."

"What other tinker?" said Mr. Hynes.

"Colgan," said the old man scornfully.

"It is because Colgan's a working-man you say that? What's the difference between a good honest bricklayer and a publican—eh? Hasn't the working-man as good a right to be in the Corporation as anyone else—ay, and a better right than those shoneens that are always hat in hand before any fellow with a handle to his name? Isn't that so, Mat?" said Mr. Hynes, addressing Mr. O'Connor.

"I think you are right," said Mr. O'Connor.

"One man is a plain honest man with no hunker-sliding about him. He goes in to represent the labour classes. This fellow you're working for only wants to get some job or other."

"Of course, the working-classes should be represented," said the old man.

"The working-man," said Mr. Hynes, "gets all kicks and no halfpence. But it's labour produces everything. The working-man is not looking for fat jobs for his sons and nephews and cousins. The working-man is not going to drag the honour of Dublin in the mud to please a German monarch."

"How's that?" said the old man.

"Don't you know they want to present an address of welcome to Edward Rex if he comes here next year? What do we want kowtowing to a foreign king?"

"Our man won't vote for the address," said Mr. O'Connor. "He goes in on the Nationalist ticket."

"Won't he?" said Mr. Hynes. "Wait till you see whether he will or not. I know him. Is it Tricky Dicky Tierney?"

"By God! perhaps you're right, Joe," said Mr. O'Connor. "Anyway, I wish he'd turn up with the spondulics."

The three men fell silent. The old man began to rake more cinders together. Mr. Hynes took off his hat, shook it and then turned down the collar of his coat, displaying, as he did so, an ivy leaf in the lapel.

"If this man was alive," he said, pointing to the leaf, "we'd have no talk of an address of welcome."

"That's true," said Mr. O'Connor.

"Musha, God be with them times!" said the old man. "There was some life in it then."

The room was silent again. Then a bustling little man with a snuffling nose and very cold ears pushed in the door. He walked over quickly to the fire, rubbing his hands as if he intended to produce a spark from them.

"No money, boys," he said.

"Sit down here, Mr. Henchy," said the old man, offering him his chair.

"O, don't stir, Jack, don't stir," said Mr. Henchy.

He nodded curtly to Mr. Hynes and sat down on the chair which the old man vacated.

"Did you serve Aungier Street?" he asked Mr. O'Connor.

"Yes," said Mr. O'Connor, beginning to search his pockets for memoranda.

"Did you call on Grimes?"

"I did."

"Well? How does he stand?"

"He wouldn't promise. He said: 'I won't tell anyone what way I'm going to vote.' But I think he'll be all right.'

"Why so?"

"He asked me who the nominators were; and I told him. I mentioned Father Burke's name. I think it'll be all right."

Mr. Henchy began to snuffle and to rub his hands over the fire at a terrific speed. Then he said:

"For the love of God, Jack, bring us a bit of coal. There must be some left."

The old man went out of the room.

"It's no go," said Mr. Henchy, shaking his head. "I asked the little shoeboy, but he said: 'O, now, Mr. Henchy, when I see the work going on properly I won't forget you, you may be sure.' Mean little tinker! 'Usha, how could he be anything else?"

"What did I tell you, Mat?" said Mr Hynes. "Tricky Dicky Tierney."

"O, he's as tricky as they make 'em," said Mr. Henchy. "He hasn't got those little pigs' eyes for nothing. Blast his soul! Couldn't he pay up like a man instead of: 'O, now, Mr. Henchy, I must speak to Mr. Fanning. . . . I've spent a lot of money'? Mean little schoolboy of hell! I suppose he forgets the time his little old father kept the hand-me-down shop in Mary's Lane."

"But is that a fact?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"God, yes," said Mr. Henchy. "Did you never hear that? And the men used to go in on Sunday morning before the houses were open to buy a waistcoat or a trousers—moya! But Tricky Dicky's little old father always had a tricky little black bottle up in a corner. Do you mind now? That's that. That's where he first saw the light."

The old man returned with a few lumps of coal which he placed here and there on the fire.

"That's a nice how-do-you do," said Mr. O'Connor. "How does he expect us to work for him if he won't stump up?"

"I can't help it," said Mr. Henchy. "I expect to find the bailiffs in the hall when I go home."

Mr. Hynes laughed and, shoving himself away from the mantelpiece with the aid of his shoulders, made ready to leave.

"It'll be all right when King Eddie comes," he said. "Well, boys, I'm off for the present. See you later. 'Bye, 'bye."

He went out of the room slowly. Neither Mr. Henchy nor the old man said anything, but, just as the door was closing, Mr. O'Connor, who had been staring moodily into the fire, called out suddenly:

"'Bye, Joe."

Mr. Henchy waited a few moments and then nodded in the direction of the door.

"Tell me," he said across the fire, "what brings our friend in here? What does he want?"

"'Usha, poor Joe!" said Mr. O'Connor, throwing the end of his cigarette into the fire, "he's hard up, like the rest of us."

Mr. Henchy snuffled vigorously and spat so copiously that he nearly put out the fire, which uttered a hissing protest.

"To tell you my private and candid opinion," he said, "I think he's a man from the other camp. He's a spy of Colgan's, if you ask me. Just go round and try and find out how they're getting on. They won't suspect you. Do you twig?"

"Ah, poor Joe is a decent skin," said Mr. O'Connor.

"His father was a decent, respectable man," Mr. Henchy admitted. "Poor old Larry Hynes! Many a good turn he did in his day! But I'm greatly afraid our friend is not nineteen carat. Damn it, I can understand a fellow being hard up, but what I can't understand is a fellow sponging. Couldn't he have some spark of manhood about him?"

"He doesn't get a warm welcome from me when he

comes," said the old man. "Let him work for his own side and not come spying round here."

"I don't know," said Mr. O'Connor dubiously, as he took out cigarette-papers and tobacco. "I think Joe Hynes is a straight man. He's a clever chap, too, with the pen. Do you remember that thing he wrote . . .?"

"Some of these hillsiders and fenians are a bit too clever if you ask me," said Mr. Henchy. "Do you know what my private and candid opinion is about some of those little jokers? I believe half of them are in the pay of the Castle."

"There's no knowing," said the old man.

"O, but I know it for a fact," said Mr. Henchy. "They're Castle hacks . . . I don't say Hynes . . . No, damn it, I think he's a stroke above that . . . But there's a certain little nobleman with a cock-eye—you know the patriot I'm alluding to?"

Mr. O'Connor nodded.

"There's a lineal descendant of Major Sirr for you if you like! O, the heart's blood of a patriot! That's a fellow now that'd sell his country for fourpence—ay—and go down on his bended knees and thank the Almighty Christ he had a country to sell."

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" said Mr. Henchy.

A person resembling a poor clergyman or a poor actor appeared in the doorway. His black clothes were tightly buttoned on his short body and it was impossible to say whether he wore a clergyman's collar or a layman's, because the collar of his shabby frock-coat, the uncovered buttons of which reflected the candle-light, was turned up about his neck. He wore a round hat of hard black felt.

His face, shining with raindrops, had the appearance of damp yellow cheese save where two rosy spots indicated the cheek-bones. He opened his very long mouth suddenly to express disappointment and at the same time opened wide his very bright blue eyes to express pleasure and surprise.

"O Father Keon!" said Mr. Henchy, jumping up from his chair. "Is that you? Come in!"

"O, no, no, no!" said Father Keon quickly, pursing his lips as if he were addressing a child.

"Won't you come in and sit down?"

"No, no, no!" said Father Keon, speaking in a discreet, indulgent, velvety voice. "Don't let me disturb you now! I'm just looking for Mr. Fanning. . . ."

"He's round at the Black Eagle," said Mr. Henchy. "But won't you come in and sit down a minute?"

"No, no, thank you. It was just a little business matter," said Frank Keon. "Thank you, indeed."

He retreated from the doorway and Mr. Henchy, seizing one of the candlesticks, went to the door to light him downstairs.

"O, don't trouble, I beg!"

"No, but the stairs is so dark."

"No, no, I can see. . . . Thank you, indeed."

"Are you right now?"

"All right, thanks. . . . Thanks."

Mr. Henchy returned with the candlestick and put it on the table. He sat down again at the fire. There was silence for a few moments.

"Tell me, John," said Mr. O'Connor, lighting his cigarette with another pasteboard card.

"Hm?"

"What he is exactly?"

"Ask me an easier one," said Mr. Henchy.

"Fanning and himself seem to me very thick. They're often in Kavanagh's together. Is he a priest at all?"

" 'Mmmyes, I believe so. . . . I think he's what you call a black sheep. We haven't many of them, thank God! but we have a few. . . . He's an unfortunate man of some kind. . . ."

"And how does he knock it out?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"That's another mystery."

"Is he attached to any chapel or church or institution or——"

"No," said Mr. Henchy, "I think he's travelling on his own account. . . . God forgive me," he added, "I thought he was the dozen of stout."

"Is there any chance of a drink itself?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"I'm dry too," said the old man.

"I asked that little shoeboy three times," said Mr. Henchy, "would he send up a dozen of stout. I asked him again now, but he was leaning on the counter in his shirt-sleeves having a deep goster with Alderman Cowley."

"Why didn't you remind him?" said Mr. O'Connor.

"Well, I couldn't go over while he was talking to Alderman Cowley. I just waited till I caught his eye, and said: 'About that little matter I was speaking to you about. . . .' 'That'll be all right, Mr. H.,' he said. Yerra, sure the little hop-o'-my-thumb has forgotten all about it."

"There's some deal on in that quarter," said Mr. O'Connor thoughtfully. "I saw the three of them hard at it yesterday at Suffolk Street corner."

"I think I know the little game they're at," said Mr. Henchy. "You must owe the City Fathers money nowadays if you want to be made Lord Mayor. Then they'll make you Lord Mayor. By God! I'm thinking seriously of becoming a City Father myself. What do you think? Would I do for the job?"

Mr. O'Connor laughed.

"So far as owing money goes. . . ."

"Driving out of the Mansion House," said Mr. Henchy, "in all my vermin, with Jack here standing up behind me in a powdered wig—eh?"

"And make me your private secretary, John."

"Yes. And I'll make Father Keon my private chaplain. We'll have a family party."

"Faith, Mr. Henchy," said the old man, "you'd keep up better style than some of them. I was talking one day to old Keegan, the porter. 'And how do you like your new master, Pat?' says I to him. 'You haven't much entertaining now,' says I. 'Entertaining!' says he. 'He'd live on the smell of an oil-rag.' And do you know what he told me? Now, I declare to God, I didn't believe him."

"What?" said Mr. Henchy and Mr. O'Connor.

"He told me: 'What do you think of a Lord Mayor of Dublin sending out for a pound of chops for his dinner? How's that for high living?' says he. 'Wisha! wisha,' says I. 'A pound of chops,' says he, 'coming into the Mansion House.' 'Wisha!' says I, 'what kind of people is going at all now?' "

At this point there was a knock at the door, and a boy put in his head.

"What is it?" said the old man.

"From the Black Eagle," said the boy, walking in sideways and depositing a basket on the floor with a noise of shaken bottles.

The old man helped the boy to transfer the bottles from the basket to the table and counted the full tally. After the transfer the boy put his basket on his arm and asked:

"Any bottles?"

"What bottles?" said the old man.

"Won't you let us drink them first?" said Mr. Henchy.

"I was told to ask for bottles."

"Come back to-morrow," said the old man.

"Here, boy!" said Mr. Henchy, "will you run over to O'Farrell's and ask him to lend us a corkscrew—for Mr. Henchy, say. Tell him we won't keep it a minute. Leave the basket there."

The boy went out and Mr. Henchy began to rub his hands cheerfully, saying:

"Ah, well, he's not so bad after all. He's as good as his word, anyhow."

"There's no tumblers," said the old man.

"O, don't let that trouble you, Jack," said Mr. Henchy. "Many's the good man before now drank out of the bottle."

"Anyway, it's better than nothing," said Mr. O'Connor.

"He's not a bad sort," said Mr. Henchy, "only Fanning has such a loan of him. He means well, you know, in his own tinpot way."

The boy came back with the corkscrew. The old man opened three bottles and was handing back the corkscrew when Mr. Henchy said to the boy,

"Would you like a drink, boy?"

"If you please, sir," said the boy.

The old man opened another bottle grudgingly, and handed it to the boy.

"What age are you?" he asked.

"Seventeen," said the boy.

As the old man said nothing further, the boy took the bottle, said: "Here's my best respects, sir, to Mr. Henchy," drank the contents, put the bottle back on the table and wiped his mouth with his sleeve. Then he took up the corkscrew and went out of the door sideways, muttering some form of salutation.

"That's the way it begins," said the old man.

"The thin edge of the wedge," said Mr. Henchy.

The old man distributed the three bottles which he had opened and the men drank from them simultaneously. After having drunk each placed his bottle on the mantelpiece within hand's reach and drew in a long breath of satisfaction.

"Well, I did a good day's work to-day," said Mr. Henchy, after a pause.

"That so, John?"

"Yes. I got him one or two sure things in Dawson Street, Crofton and myself. Between ourselves, you know, Crofton (he's a decent chap, of course), but he's not worth a damn as a canvasser. He hasn't a word to throw to a dog. He stands and looks at the people while I do the talking."

Here two men entered the room. One of them was a

very fat man, whose blue serge clothes seemed to be in danger of falling from his sloping figure. He had a big face which resembled a young ox's face in expression, staring blue eyes and a grizzled moustache. The other man, who was much younger and frailer, had a thin, clean-shaven face. He wore a very high double collar and a wide-brimmed bowler hat.

"Hello, Crofton!" said Mr. Henchy to the fat man. "Talk of the devil . . ."

"Where did the boose come from?" asked the young man. "Did the cow calve?"

"O, of course, Lyons spots the drink first thing!" said Mr. O'Connor laughing.

"Is that the way you chaps canvass," said Mr. Lyons, "and Crofton and I out in the cold and rain looking for votes?"

"Why, blast your soul," said Mr. Henchy, "I'd get more votes in five minutes than you two'd get in a week."

"Open two bottles of stout, Jack," said Mr. O'Connor.

"How can I?" said the old man, "when there's no corkscrew?"

"Wait now, wait now!" said Mr. Henchy, getting up quickly. "Did you ever see this little trick?"

He took two bottles from the table and, carrying them to the fire, put them on the hob. Then he sat down again by the fire and took another drink from his bottle. Mr. Lyons sat on the edge of the table, pushed his hat towards the nape of his neck and began to swing his legs.

"Which is my bottle?" he asked.

"This, lad," said Mr. Henchy.

Mr. Crofton sat down on a box and looked fixedly at the other bottle on the hob. He was silent for two reasons. The first reason, sufficient in itself, was that he had nothing to say; the second reason was that he considered his companions beneath him. He had been a canvasser for Wilkins, the Conservative, but when the Conservatives had withdrawn their man and, choosing the lesser of two evils, given their support to the Nationalist candidate, he had been engaged to work for Mr. Tierney.

In a few minutes an apologetic "Pok!" was heard as the cork flew out of Mr. Lyons' bottle. Mr. Lyons jumped off the table, went to the fire, took his bottle and carried it back to the table.

"I was just telling them, Crofton," said Mr. Henchy, "that we got a good few votes to-day."

"Who did you get?" asked Mr. Lyons.

"Well, I got Parkes for one, and I got Atkinson for two, and I got Ward of Dawson Street. Fine old chap he is, too—regular old toff, old Conservative! 'But isn't your candidate a Nationalist?' said he. 'He's a respectable man,' said I. He's in favour of whatever will benefit this country. He's a big rate-payer,' I said. 'He has extensive house property in the city and three places of business and isn't it to his own advantage to keep down the rates? He's a prominent and respected citizen,' said I, 'and a Poor Law Guardian, and he doesn't belong to any party, good, bad, or indifferent.' That's the way to talk to 'em."

"And what about the address to the King?" said Mr. Lyons, after drinking and smacking his lips.

"Listen to me," said Mr. Henchy. "What we want

in this country, as I said to old Ward, is capital. The King's coming here will mean an influx of money into this country. The citizens of Dublin will benefit by it. Look at all the factories down by the quays there, idle! Look at all the money there is in the country if we only worked the old industries, the mills, the ship-building yards and factories. It's capital we want."

"But look here, John," said Mr. O'Connor. "Why should we welcome the King of England? Didn't Parnell himself . . ."

"Parnell," said Mr. Henchy, "is dead. Now, here's the way I look at it. Here's this chap come to the throne after his old mother keeping him out of it till the man was grey. He's a man of the world, and he means well by us. He's a jolly fine decent fellow, if you ask me, and no damn nonsense about him. He just says to himself: 'The old one never went to see these wild Irish. By Christ, I'll go myself and see what they're like.' And are we going to insult the man when he comes over here on a friendly visit? Eh? Isn't that right, Crofton?"

Mr. Crofton nodded his head.

"But after all now," said Mr. Lyons argumentatively, "King Edward's life, you know, is not the very . . ."

"Let bygones be bygones," said Mr. Henchy. "I admire the man personally. He's just an ordinary knockabout like you and me. He's fond of his glass of grog and he's a bit of a rake, perhaps, and he's a good sportsman. Damn it, can't we Irish play fair?"

"That's all very fine," said Mr. Lyons. "But look at the case of Parnell now."

"In the name of God," said Mr. Henchy, "where's the analogy between the two cases?"

"What I mean," said Mr. Lyons, "is we have our ideals. Why, now, would we welcome a man like that? Do you think now after what he did Parnell was a fit man to lead us? And why, then, would we do it for Edward the Seventh?"

"This is Parnell's anniversary," said Mr. O'Connor, "and don't let us stir up any bad blood. We all respect him now that he's dead and gone—even the Conservatives," he added, turning to Mr. Crofton.

Pok! The tardy cork flew out of Mr. Crofton's bottle. Mr. Crofton got up from his box and went to the fire. As he returned with his capture he said in a deep voice:

"Our side of the house respects him, because he was a gentleman."

"Right you are, Crofton!" said Mr. Henchy fiercely. "He was the only man that could keep that bag of cats in order. 'Down, ye dogs! Lie down, ye curs!' That's the way he treated them. Come in Joe! Come in!" he called out, catching sight of Mr. Hynes in the doorway.

Mr. Hynes came in slowly.

"Open another bottle of stout, Jack," said Mr. Henchy. "O, I forgot there's no corkscrew! Here, show me one here and I'll put it at the fire."

The old man handed him another bottle and he placed it on the hob.

"Sit down, Joe," said Mr. O'Connor, "we're just talking about the Chief."

"Ay, ay!" said Mr. Henchy.

Mr. Hynes sat on the side of the table near Mr. Lyons but said nothing.

"There's one of them, anyhow," said Mr. Henchy, "that didn't renege him. By God, I'll say for you, Joe! No, by God, you stuck to him like a man!"

"O, Joe," said Mr. O'Connor suddenly. "Give us that thing you wrote—do you remember? Have you got it on you?"

"O, ay!" said Mr. Henchy. "Give us that. Did you ever hear that, Crofton? Listen to this now: splendid thing."

"Go on," said Mr. O'Connor. "Fire away, Joe."

Mr. Hynes did not seem to remember at once the piece to which they were alluding, but, after reflecting a while, he said:

"O, that thing is it . . . Sure, that's old now."

"Out with it, man!" said Mr. O'Connor.

"'Sh, 'sh," said Mr. Henchy. "Now, Joe!"

Mr. Hynes hesitated a little longer. Then amid the silence he took off his hat, laid it on the table and stood up. He seemed to be rehearsing the piece in his mind. After a rather long pause he announced:

THE DEATH OF PARNELL

6th October, 1891

He cleared his throat once or twice and then began to recite:

He is dead. Our Uncrowned King is dead.
O, Erin, mourn with grief and woe
For he lies dead whom the fell gang
Of modern hypocrites laid low.

He lies slain by the coward hounds
  He raised to glory from the mire;
And Erin's hopes and Erin's dreams
  Perish upon her monarch's pyre.

In palace, cabin or in cot
  The Irish heart where'er it be
Is bowed with woe—for he is gone
  Who would have wrought her destiny.

He would have had his Erin famed,
  The green flag gloriously unfurled,
Her statesmen, bards and warriors raised
  Before the nations of the World.

He dreamed (alas, 'twas but a dream!)
  Of Liberty: but as he strove
To clutch that idol, treachery
  Sundered him from the thing he loved.

Shame on the coward, caitiff hands
  That smote their Lord or with a kiss
Betrayed him to the rabble-rout
  Of fawning priests—no friends of his.

May everlasting shame consume
  The memory of those who tried
To befoul and smear the exalted name
  Of one who spurned them in his pride.

He fell as fall the mighty ones,
  Nobly undaunted to the last,
And death has now united him
  With Erin's heroes of the past.

No sound of strife disturb his sleep!
  Calmly he rests: no human pain
Or high ambition spurs him now
  The peaks of glory to attain.

They had their way: they laid him low.
  But Erin, list, his spirit may
Rise, like the Phoenix from the flames,
  When breaks the dawning of the day,

The day that brings us Freedom's reign.
  And on that day may Erin well
Pledge in the cup she lifts to Joy
  One grief—the memory of Parnell.

Mr. Hynes sat down again on the table. When he had finished his recitation there was a silence and then a burst of clapping: even Mr. Lyons clapped. The applause continued for a little time. When it had ceased all the auditors drank from their bottles in silence.

Pok! The cork flew out of Mr. Hynes' bottle, but Mr. Hynes remained sitting flushed and bare-headed on the table. He did not seem to have heard the invitation.

"Good man, Joe!" said Mr. O'Connor, taking out his cigarette papers and pouch the better to hide his emotion.

"What do you think of that, Crofton?" cried Mr. Henchy. "Isn't that fine? What?"

Mr. Crofton said that it was a very fine piece of writing.

X

If Joyce creates any of his O'Connors and Croftons instead of observing them, he cuts them loose from himself before he draws back the curtain of the stage he sets for them. He describes their faces and their coats more curtly than most modern playwrights, and they play their own parts without even a sympathetic direction from their creator. They walk up and down Dublin as they might walk up and down a stage without footlights or dressing-rooms, and except for an occaional He asked himself . . . or He thought of . . . Mr. James Duffy's meditations on his Painful Case are as subcutaneous as Mrs. Bloom's vortical mental orgasms, and Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom are precisely as remote from Joyce when they listen to the current of their own consciousness and speak to each other and to George Russell and John Eglinton as Crofton and Henchy and old Jack are—as remote as Parnell himself.

Ulysses is dozens of Ivy Days and Painful Cases and Boarding Houses and Counterparts without conjunctions and with an epic diversity and an epic unity because Joyce is not so much a follower as a contemporary of Freud's, just as he is a contemporary and not a product of the war that is called the European War because no one has thought of a better name for it. That war undoubtedly inspired a great deal of poetry from the poets who write in verses, perhaps because poets who

write in verses are more likely to find themselves inspired by such a war as that war than a writer of stories who is even the most collateral descendant of Petronius or of Voltaire or who seems likely to become even the most collateral ancestor of the stories of the future, perhaps because men have a tendency to become rhythmical and primitive and hysterical in the vicinity of the cannon's mouth, perhaps because a sonnet is more easily remembered between the cannon's mouth and a sheet of paper than even the shortest story. And it has inspired a whole new literature of plays as well as a whole new literature of verse in Germany, but the years since nineteen seventeen have not been epoch-making years in American fiction because they are the years since that war ceased to be entirely European—no rational person could believe that Sherwood Anderson wrote Winesburg, Ohio because the Germans had just signed a humiliating armistice and had given the French their revenge, when its extraordinary difference from Marching Men is so obviously caused by nothing more external than his discovery of his own way of telling his own stories and his discovery that the novel was very much less his own form than the story. And no rational person could believe that James Branch Cabell wrote The Cream of the Jest because his country was declaring war on Germany or that he had achieved the perfections of The Certain Hour and of its auctorial induction the year before because the English had their backs to a wall in France, or that Joseph Hergesheimer recovered from the Conradian blight that darkened Wild Oranges and found another manner and another prose in The Three Black Pennys and The Flower of

Spain because Henry James had renounced his procrastinating country.

And no rational person could believe that anything except the early death of Henry James would have changed the admirable stories that Michael Arlen wrote in The London Venture and The Romantic Lady, that Aldous Huxley would have written like Thomas Hardy or Arnold Bennett if the Emperor Franz Ferdinand were now receiving ladies and gentlemen with sixteen quarterings in his Hofburg in Vienna—that the Oxford undergraduate who translated the symbolisms of Mallarmé would have become the author of anything more solemn than a story like Nuns at Luncheon, which follows Laforgue, somewhat remotely, by making a brilliant game of story-telling tell a story, that Ronald Firbank would have done anything less amusing than uniting the conscientious depravity of Oscar Wilde with the learned levity and the elegant incongruity of Laforgue, or that the pathetic young Americans who imitate Firbank's and Huxley's and George Moore's imitations of the French would have waited to become civilized before they became decadent. Even the sensitive Katherine Mansfield would no doubt have written Bliss and The Garden Party if Belgium had never been violated; and if she had never written the too clever and too sentimental and too cynical story called The Fly her small and exquisite reputation would have been as much more exquisite as if The Adelphi had never published even its first number. She would still have united the admirable technique of Chekhov with the admirable technique of Henry James and with the admirable techniques of half a dozen Frenchmen, and she would still have

added to that happy union the admirable quality of being a woman.

And no rational person could believe that Jean Cocteau would have been a Sainte-Beuve and that Raymond Radiguet would have been a Rolland if no unknown soldier slept under the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile and no eternal light burned above him, or that Paul Morand would have been an Anatole France if he had never seen the field of honour—or that the ladies of Tendres Stocks and Ouvert la Nuit would have been Seraphitas and Virginias if Marcel Proust had not written the epic of modern France that Balzac was too clumsy to write, and if he had not written a preface for Tendres Stocks which politely offered to lend Morand the clue to the Hôtel de Balbec and which politely called attention to Morand's meritorious and fatiguing fashion of uniting ideas with new relations and to his lamentable fashion of conceiving comparisons which did not seem quite inevitable comparisons to Marcel Proust. Proust is in the great French tradition, and Morand is in the tradition of Laforgue as often as he is in any tradition, but Proust and Morand and Huxley and Sherwood Anderson and Professor Freud and the European War are all part of this age and if they are not quite equal parts the eighteenth century and the nineteenth made a twentieth century with something very like all of them inevitable.

Phidias left sculptors very little to do except imitate him, unless they imitated the sculptors of Asia and Africa in a commendable effort not to model more Venuses de Medici and more Greek Slaves, and Sappho and Euripides and the poet called Homer left lyric and dramatic and epic poets nothing much except hopelessly

exalted patterns and the privilege of discovering more patterns. The Florentines—or the Flemish, if you like—left painters nothing much to discover except colour and light, and Beethoven left composers nothing much to discover except the whole tone scale. The novel and the story did not achieve a discouraging perfection until about the year nineteen hundred, but twenty years before that Laforgue had realized that the French story was complete and he had begun painting Tanagra figurines. Laforgue was not an accidental contemporary of Wagner and Manet and Degas and Debussy, and Morand is not an accidental contemporary of Stravinski and Satie and Picasso and Matisse and Marie Laurencin and Gertrude Stein and Pirandello—of Pirandello who writes plays that laugh at the theatre and of Satie and Ravel who write music that laughs at music and of all the musicians who become modern by proceeding towards document and of all the painters who become modern by proceeding away from document. The eighteenth century passionately denied everything except the three unities and the rhyming couplet, and the nineteenth century passionately denied everything without any exception. The twentieth century is left with no beliefs and no disbeliefs—it has only tastes and distastes and a certain interest in its own unconscious, and Morand is the perfect expression of its pleasant nirvana of the emotions and of the intelligence which makes merry with the very art it practices as scrupulously as Flaubert. His eleven Nights—which are not yet Short-stories according to any definition that would be accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a degree—are eleven portraits and eleven records of a

lack of enthusiasm for such various phenomena as the Third Internationale, sport, diplomacy, and patriotism as an activity for poets. When the portrait is painted, the idea that is its subject's religion is destroyed, and Morand's admirably invisible form is complete. Morand did not renounce the gaieté, the malice and the polissonnerie which are the official components of the esprit gaulois when he achieved a prose whose individuality is an extraordinary victory over the French language and whose English influence cannot be translated back into English, but his polissonnerie became cosmopolissonnerie—which is not quite the same thing as international impropriety—and if the arrière-boutique de la conscience comes to the surface only in The Charlottenburg Night and in Lewis and Irène, Morand's internationalism is always as conscious as the list of extramural amours in The Nordic Night.

Like Mérimée's stories, Morand's stories are more Parisian than French, and like Mérimée, he regrets the taste for travel which takes him away from the chestnuts of the Champs Elysées to the black-bordered birches of Finland and away from the Corinthian temples of Paris to the Doric temples of Athens; but there was nothing about Corsica in Mérimée's stories of Paris and nothing about Corsica and Paris in his stories of Spain —even the traveller who came back from Egypt in The Etruscan Vase came back to show the questions a Thémines and a Roquantin and a Beaujeu would ask him and to allow Saint Clair's escape, not to record the difference between the tomb of Cheops and the tomb of Napoleon. Morand writes of the life he has lived and he compliments a lady by comparing her hair to the

wires of a magneto, just as Proust wrote of the life he had lived and Joyce and Lawrence and Anderson write of the less charming lives they have lived—he writes of Irish poets and Spanish communists and of German barons who collect snakes to record their difference from French poets and French communists and from French barons who collect stamps, and he wrote The Nordic Night to record his doubt that the French and the Scandinavian attitudes towards the divine human body lead to very different results.

There are still belated citizens of the eighteenth century and of the nineteenth in the world, and there are still robust readers and writers who reproach Morand for his lack of passion and who do not enjoy the analytical excursions of Proust and who do not enjoy seeing Joyce take the English language in and out of top-hats and send it sailing through paper hoops. But Morand and Proust and Joyce belong to our day—they know, among a vast number of other things, the things that we know, and they think, among a vast number of other things, the things that we think, and we are more indebted to a critic who brings down one of their feathers than to a critic who strikes the white centre of a target riddled by the bullets of centuries of criticism. If they are decadent, we are decadent with them—without waiting to go through the most agreeable stage between rudeness and decadence—and perhaps what is called our civilization should be swept away by a revolution redder than Moscow's and the journey of the arts from Gothic to romantic and classic should begin again. Perhaps the Romans who preferred Petronius's record of the conversation on the day when Giton and Encolpius

feasted at the board of Trimalchio to Plato's record of the evening when Socrates and Aristophanes and Alcibiades held their symposium on the nature of love at Agathon's banquet did not invite a fiery downfall more than we do when we find the conversation at the feast from which a king called Macbeth was driven by the ghost of a general called Banquo and Daniel's record of the conversation at the feast where a king called Belshazzar drank wine before a thousand of his lords and where the fingers of a man's hand came forth and wrote disquieting words over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the king's wall less related to us than Proust's record of the conversation at the Duchesse de Guermantes' dinner and Joyce's record of the supper Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom shared with the medical students of Dublin and Morand's record of the conversation at the supper where Aïno composed symphonies of fish.

THE NORDIC NIGHT

BY PAUL MORAND

THE Gothic doorway was lighted by a two hundred candle-power lamp. I stopped on the pavement across from it. Some men went in alone, and then some other men who had women with them. My heart was beating quickly and I stood there unheroically until people had stopped going in. A discouraging stairway led up to a door in front of which sawdust had been scattered. I smelled gas and chilled perspiration in the vestibule. A little girl with neat braids read my temporary membership card—a small hexagon of parchment—and I was allowed to go into the men's coat-room. Shirts were hanging up, emptied of their bodies; suspenders were resting themselves; boots turned up their rubber heels—the Nordic feet had not escaped that wave of American exportation which overwhelmed eastern Europe with calculating machines and fly-killers and dental floss the day after the armistice. A nickel shoe-horn glittered in the middle of the floor.

Should I take off my clothes? The placards on the wall would have told me, but how could I understand those words with faces like toads or insects ready to sting, and bearing numberless diæreses like blisters or little balloons on their backs? I half-opened the door after I had taken off my shoes—that was the correct costume for a mosque, but I could see two of the mem-

bers in what might be called formal dress, and I was evidently not in the correct costume for this club. One of them was facing me and leaning against a balustrade. His head was covered with a thatch as dry as a lichen—the meagre promise of a white beard which flowed down his chest and became a tangle like the horse-hair one sees bursting out of old sofas in second-hand shops. The beard was cleft by a straight parting below his chest, frothed there for a moment, twined around his legs like ivy, and finished its journey on his feet. His interlocutor had his back turned towards me. He had stiff black hair and the ends of gold spectacles glittered behind his ears. He wore nothing else, and he was rhythmically moving his right toes up and down.

I shut the door and sat down on a bench. I had been going to fencing-schools and athletic clubs and swimming-pools and Turkish baths since I was a child, and I should not have disliked undressing myself. And I did not forget to reassure myself by remembering that I was here of my own free will and that I had asked to become a member of the Dianabund—the Diana Society.

Without going as far as Bohemia and the fifteenth century when the Hussite schism was followed by sects who turned back to Adamic nudity as a sure way of getting into heaven, and who did end by getting massacred, I had often heard of Teutonic groups whose members were united by their common desire to live without clothes. A German review devoted to questions of æsthetics and hygiene and even eugenics had told me that there were some offsprings of this new mutuality, Nacktkultur, in the northern countries. An advertisement in the Swedish review Beauty did the rest.

"Men and women of the Aryan race who wish to join a serious society which shares the ideals of the review Beauty are asked to write to box 78, general delivery at . . . Branches in the northern countries."

When I happened to be in —— some time after that, I wrote to box 78, enclosing a stamp for an answer, and I received a note from a certain Doctor Vulpius, who asked me to state why I wished to join the Society, and to give my age, my occupation, and so on. I sent the doctor a declaration of principles written in the tone of the review, evoking the great civilizations of the past, the festivals of Sparta, the Germania of Tacitus, and even recalling from a medical standpoint the efficacious chemical action of the sun on the skin.

They gave me an appointment two days later at the Café Odin, in the Prince Alexander room on the second floor. I was to be admitted to the presence of the executive committee during the illustrated lecture the Society would be holding there.

I was at the café about seven o'clock in the evening, after dinner. The hall overlooked the wooded harbour. The mast-heads of the Norwegian ships, whose icy yard-arms were the only souvenirs of the recently melted snow, were as high as the double windows from which the paper that had been glued on for the winter was not yet torn away. The evening breeze broke the waves as far out as the islands which entered the water in a gentle slope that was followed by the refitters' slips, lined with newly tarred boats and flaming with red lead and with the setting sun.

The president, who I knew must be Doctor Vulpius, was blind, and wore black spectacles over a landscape

of dermal copperas. He was solemnly reciting his official report from the centre of the tribunal, flanked by the vice-president and the treasurer. The treasurer was a turtle-headed blonde, undoubtedly an officer's widow, holding a lorgnette and topped-off by a hat with a wreath of jonquils. Her eyes darted an exploring and infallible look which caught me as a mooring cable catches a boat and held me while her thoughts boarded my thoughts. I was sure that the final decree depended on this holy porteress.

I gave an account of myself in English. My discourse was translated to a young girl who was hidden from me by the paper on her typewriter, and she read it in the vernacular. The examination lasted twenty minutes. My French nationality won more interest than sympathy for me and did not inspire confidence.

"You assure us that no indecent curiosity influences you to join the Society?"

"We admit only persons of proven respectability, who are not given to alcoholic drinks or theosophy or to immoral books, and who have settled incomes."

The assistant on the right was a man about forty years old who wore a frock coat and a red beard and was very polite. He brought the interrogatory to an end.

"Do you visit any Russians? Or any Jews?"

After I had given up my passport and paid a deposit, the jury deliberated in whispers. Then the typewriter played.

"You will be admitted for two months if you pass the medical examination. You will receive an appointment. Please go into the waiting-room."

I stood up when the door opened. The typist came in, and gave me an envelope and a smile in which I read a favourable verdict. All the timidity was on my side. I felt the impressiveness of these solemn rites, these silences, and these sincere ceremonies. I began to see her at that moment. She had blue eyes that were edged with black lashes as even as fringe, an affable mouth and short hair with pale shadows like gold lace. I was on the point of deploying my charms and bursting into conversation, but she suddenly put her feet together and made an adorable bow, very quickly. It was a little shiver that ran from her heels to her head. Her hair fell forward and trembled, and she slipped out of the room without speaking.

The next day I passed the medical examination in the consulting room of a hospital in the suburbs, a sort of pesthouse where refugees from Kronstadt left their lice. A rapid examination, but rigorous, all contagious diseases being exclusive (even bad breath and intestinal worms) as well as skin diseases and physical deformities likely to spoil the pleasure of the other members.

I was passed and allowed to pay the fees and to see the rules. My uneasiness grew as I read them and considered one of the sentences. "The slightest infraction of the Society's ideals or an indecency likely to shock the delicacy of the members entails immediate expulsion."

With no other raiment than a turquoise on one of my fingers, I would have to hold up my head and walk into the athletic hall, where the members of the Diana-bund were passing the evening in the costume of Eden. I was going to be one of them. The Society was author-

ized by the police, and the members considered what they were doing quite natural, but it did not seem quite natural to me. Certainly, my apprehension diminished when I remembered my other experiences in the north—mixed sun-baths on the German beaches, Swedish water-cures where one is delivered into gentle feminine hands worn by soap, and Russian swimming-pools among the Islands where I had seen sun-burned men and women meet in water as blue as fountain-pen ink. But in spite of all that, the idea of suddenly finding myself among old ladies and young ladies was disquieting. I half-opened the door again. A third interlocutor had joined the other two on the rostrum decorated with flags and gilded palms and snakes in oil. I looked at him. A fountain-pen in a black leather case was hanging around his neck, but there seemed to be no question of a pair of drawers even for a novice. I was already late, and I should evidently be ready last. With measured steps, clenched hands, and a dry throat I resolutely entered the hall.

I first saw a "restaurant" where unattired families sat in wicker chairs and took coffee and milk with radishes. The scene was like a repast in the cooling-room of a Turkish bath. A lady who was knitting with her work in her lap looked like a bad dream. I heard calls and cries and the floor shook under stamping feet. Balls rolled along with the noise of thunder-storms and smashed against the ten-pins. I was in a long room with a great many windows that were shuttered with the varnished fir one sees everywhere in that country. About forty men and women were disporting themselves. A whole company of men were doing high

jumping, leaping over a rope that could be adjusted every two centimetres. A gentleman who looked like the king of Sweden dismantled by a revolution phlegmatically raised the rope a notch after every series. I tried to concentrate my attention on the sports and to avoid looking at the ladies. Towards the other end of the room there was some gymnastic apparatus. A few amateurs raised themselves and then fell into the sawdust, or limbered up their dorsal muscles with clubs. Some athletic youths threw javelins against mattresses, and while they were resting they rinsed their mouths with iced water and then threw it off on the floor. Some aged ladies, looking like victims of a penitentiary system, performed hexagonal promenades on one foot, or accomplished triangular leaps that reminded me of the game called hop-scotch. The noise of striking rings drew my attention. I raised my eyes, lowered like a nun's until then, and saw a curious suspended ball made of knotted limbs, from which pointed elbows and rounded knees came out. Then the body slowly turned on itself. Resting on jutting vertebræ, a rosy back came up, hoisted by the strength of the wrists; there was a straining of the neck and a head emerged from pale golden hair which was tied with a black ribbon. She smiled, and I recognized Doctor Vulpius's typist, who had brought my certificate. She lay there in her rings like a frog, lazy, limber, and at ease, smiling up at me with the fresh irregular face of a Nordic imp. I felt little prickings spring up in the skin under my hair. The girl's head went down again, her arms opened like a ruler and stiffened. On this axis her body revolved in

a slow recovery, her legs described a quarter-circle, and put her feet solidly on the floor.

The most beautiful imaginable body of athletic adolescence was standing before me. My eyes dared not leave her face. The young lady smiled at me again and made me a little bow. I felt her breath on my arm. I cut this sport short and ran to the end of the room where the men were still jumping, made my leap and bounded on the springboard like a fanatic priest. My foot caught in the rope and I measured the floor. My nose was skinned and my palms were stinging when I stood up, but I felt better. I had to go on with some violent exercise and I could not look at the young typist. What eyes! I flung myself on the trapeze and leaped the parallel bars. What a mouth! and so merciful! I lifted some twenty kilo dumb-bells. What a perfect neck! I did a whole series of jumps that grew higher like stairs and won general esteem by my Aryan energy. But I was out of training, and I had to stop, panting and perspiring. She was standing in front of me, Eve with short hair and without embarrassment or shame, before the apple, holding out arms that were not embossed with triceps and biceps, but that were covered like a swimmer's with long spindle muscles that scarcely stood out. I was breathless.

"My name is Aïno," she said, speaking in German. "My parents beg you to have a glass of tea with them." I let myself be led away. A fat man who was clothed in the hair that erased his silhouette politely asked me to sit down. He was manager of the Baltika Hereditas Insurance Company. The young brother was exer-

cising the muscles of his fingers with spring dumb-bells. The mother held breasts large as plates between her elbows. She was reading Fichte and gave me a hyacinth to smell. Her arms were still young and only her face and her stomach were wrinkled. I felt along my thighs for pockets to put my hands in. I sneezed.

"You will soon become accustomed to going without clothes," she told me. "We live like this at home when we are alone. In the summer we go out to gather strawberries and in the winter we make a hole in the ice to dive. The beauty of the ancients is not dead, as the Lutherans say it is. It is like the swallows—our peasants believe that they spend the winter at the bottom of the lakes, and they always come again."

Then she spoke to her son.

"If you rub the skin off your fingers and make your hands ugly," she told him, "you will be thrown into a deep pit."

Everything went well. I drank tea with lemon among these robust bourgeois, who had respectable manners and showed a certain prosperity. Coffee with milk, cucumbers, and acacia fritters, looking as if they were intended for Scandinavian gods, were passed on gigantic trays. The father received me into friendship, and showed me the ravine left by an extremely rare abdominal operation. His company insured against appendicitis at a very low rate and reinsured with Lloyd. He also told me about the nutritive value of vegetables. I stole glances at Aïno. When I met her eyes and the pleasure was too great, I hurriedly turned towards some ill-shaped person, or I looked down at the warped feet of my interlocutors and at the young children who

were rolling around like lions' whelps, with their little bodies overbalanced by big heads. I was no longer afraid of being considered an unbeliever and I did not deny myself any inquiry or any research. The worst time, I thought, was past.

But some one suddenly had us play games. Cat and mouse brought no difficulty. We formed a great circle. The cat tried to catch the mouse. We interfered with him and laid a thousand traps for him. We laughed and panted. Then there was an armistice. We began the game of fox and hens: a sort of human chain, an athletic farandole in which every player held the player in front of him. The fox tried to catch the young chickens. The unit undulated, gave way, and formed again, trying to hide the prey from the hunter. Aïno was behind me. Her hands felt like hot irons. She laughed and begged me not to fall back. In front, I was anchored to a thick, fair, ugly young woman, as solid as a bridge-pier, who bent her knees to lower her centre of gravity and to resist jolts more easily. I shut my eyes and felt a new uneasiness mastering me. It was an insupportable humiliation, but at the same moment it was such an agreeable languor that I wished to stay there forever. Every minute, the violence of the game almost broke the circle. With one movement, I loosed my hold and slipped away from Aïno. I dashed out of the crowd without looking back, jumped up the stairs, and shut myself into the coat-room.

In the street, a cold wind struck my face as if it were shot from a gun loaded with salt and cut wrinkles in my cheeks. I felt as light as a dove, but all charged with electricity.

I met Aïno in a confectioner's shop two days later.

"Don't you know me?" she asked.

"Almost. You have a mole on your left shoulder and on your right breast if you are Aïno. But in that frock one can't be sure."

"Why do you have so much hair? A man who shaves his head every morning is a beautiful sight. Don't you wear your private journal around your neck on a chain with slip-knots? How do you throw the hammer? Do you always stoop like that when you walk?"

When I begged her to dine with me or to meet me somewhere— "I will come for you on a motorcycle tomorrow," she said. "We will go to G—— for Saint John's day. Take a bag."

We crossed the town, making a bow at every jolt; the horn cut thin slices of road for us and the passers-by offered scarcely any resistance. When a tramway blocked the stony road we shot over towards the sidewalk and grazed the cabs, helpless in their worn primary colours and weighed down by the astrakhan-hatted coachmen. The little horses under the lintels of the troikas shot blood-shot glances at us through their foolish forelocks. We passed strange buildings: the courts of justice and the prefecture of police, Greek temples built in the early days of the Russian occupation, and German shipping companies, with bearded statues of the managers, bare to the waist, as caryatids. In spite of the wind, people were selling everything that can be made of birch: travelling-bags, bicycles, and beds. In the shops they were selling imported manufactures: jars of tongue and safety razors, each one tied to a portrait

of General Krabb. But our reflection dominated the glass of the shop-fronts. It glided along, coupled with the merchandise, and absorbed everything by its transparence. There I was in the little red varnished coffin, from which emerged my flying hair, my weeping eyes, and a wheel that speed made oval below my contracted legs. Above my flattened image, Aïno was reflected in a green sweater, shod to the hips in oilskin boots. The delicious blonde delirium of her short hair softened the dark and malevolent mask of the grilled glasses which came down over her face like a muzzle and framed her young, thick, and reassuring mouth. Aïno drove the motorcycle attentively, insensible to the fetid odour of oil and to the rhapsody of the back-fires, cutting off the ignition and my breath at the crossings, turning the brake oftener still, looking at the escape under her knee and smiling at me under her elbow.

There were no suburbs. The country began beside the ground floor of a five-story house. A few clouds were thrown over the road like rugs. The sky was so clear above the water of the lakes that the gulls looked like crows. There were still paper-pulp mills, surmounted by aërials for wireless telegraphy. We drove through stadiums contrived in glades of the fir-wood and saw athletes adjusting their muscles for the sports. We burned the tattered ribbon that one could not call a road. I arched my legs and sat on my wrists to absorb shocks. Aïno laughed at me, and the violent jolts that almost threw me out of my box delighted her. She tried to raise my courage with words that the wind carried away. Then there was nothing left

except white birches, bordered with black like vegetable announcements of a death, and interrupted here and there by ponds edged with willows that were bent by rheumatism of the joints and filled with drowned tree-trunks floating towards the saw-mills. What splendid promises of red matches!

When I had left the Champs Elysées a month before, the trees already made it shady, they were repainting the Ambassadeurs, the oriflammes of the Salon were blooming, and the deep stream of the asphalt, polished by tires, flowed towards the Concorde. I regretted it all. So many birches! I would have given my life for one chestnut. There was a dome of green in Dresden, and the lilacs were in bloom. In Sweden, they were unscrewing the ice-cutters and putting the yachts in commission. Here, there were only the smallest buds on the trees. As I went towards the north, the film of spring wound itself backwards. We still passed birches, but only their frail bodies cut into piles of wood that ringing locomotives drew after them on their tenders. The green and red smoke that came out of the wide chimneys was not as beautiful as the blue smoke of coal, but the wind brought us back a sharp ligneous odour that was intoxicating. Useless scaffolds built for ski-contests, and unshod by the melting of the snow, scraped the sky with their skeletons.

I was happy. I took Aïno's hand and caressed her wrist affectionately, which had the effect of cutting off the ignition and stopping our journey. I pressed her in my arms. She stood up on the pedals, pushed her goggles back on her forehead, broke her comb, and tried to smooth her hair with her fingers.

"A French woman would not do that, would she? I once had a French friend. Her head was so big that she was always falling. Her hands could not hold anything, and whenever she moved, a glove or a sachet or a bag fell from her like a ripe fruit."

"My friends," I answered crossly, "order their gowns by telephone, take their baths on land, and never have stomach-ache. But not one of them has your absence of eloquence, your sun-burned skin, or a body that slips through rings as easily as cashmere."

And then, to pay her back.

"I always supposed that your countrywomen ate soap and worshipped idols with crows' heads."

This blood-red wooden house, with doors and windows framed in white and a foundation of stone, was G——. Some Russian letters had been scratched on the door.

Our two rooms were so near, and so alike with their yellow curtains, their silky birch furniture, their porcelain stoves, and their double windows with hyacinths growing between the two glasses, that I did not quite remember which was mine and which was hers. And it was so clean that I did not know where to drop my ashes.

"We will have a cold supper," she said, "and go to bed."

"Already? Shan't we wait until time for dinner?"

She smiled. I looked at my watch. It was eleven o'clock.

The cloth looked like a fish-net: it was covered with salmon and curled-up trout and herrings and with anchovies tied up by their tails in bunches of six. But

there was nothing to drink except milk and an unfermented beer. I slyly took a bottle of Norwegian brandy out of my sponge-bag. Aïno clapped her hands, opened the bottle with a hair-pin, and sneezed from joy. She filled two glasses to the brim, handed me one, and took the other. She stood at attention, clicked her heels and her tongue, and immediately did me the honour of an empty glass, which she turned up to me with a phrase I did not understand. She had taken off her boots and put on a smock with peasant embroideries and a string of vegetable ivory that rambled around her like a second dentition. We ate without speaking, like an English couple. Aïno's rougeless cheeks were brilliant, like all those Scandinavian countenances that are painted by agile blood and deepened by fresh air or the slightest scrutiny.

The laws demand abstinence. But a foreigner who comes to dinner with a few bottles of Benedictine is esteemed. In full glasses, it gives zest to fish. "It costs no more," some one had told me, "to enjoy a great many successes," not without adding that I was already paying for them dearly. My bag was a small cellar. I made various clever or despotic cocktails: "the waker of the dead," which I had from the barman of the Grand Hotel in Stockholm, and "the internal caress," which I learned in Denmark. Aïno swallowed them simply and contentedly, and so coldly that I did not ask her to take off her smock. She walked around the table composing symphonies of fish, dragging her feet along the floor from the hibernal habit of snow-shoes. When she passed me, I told her ardently that I must kiss her on her nose. She put up with it. Her skin distilled

a flavour of tar and encaustic. I took her head in my hands and went over her features one by one. She was of the Mongolian type, with the flat nose and the deep eyes that make her countrywomen look like vermillion Chinese ladies.

I asked a stupid western question: "What will your parents say?"

"This is Saint John's Eve. They will think that I am spending the night in G——." I was touched by this engaging directness, this barbarous confession—everything with which we dream of replacing our pretences and our despicable lies and our inadequate inventions. Like night, hypocrisy was reduced to nothing here: baths of frankness and baths of midnight sun.

"Aïno, you do not perspire, you do not suspect me for your own cruel pleasure, you ask nothing from the stars. You are without deceit, and without coils of hair. The men I know in Paris would say, 'She is a magnificent laundress.' You are a young girl, but you don't look like a duck. Let other women have the privilege of calling themselves musicians until eleven o'clock in the evening. You stand on your legs, you do not turn in your toes, and you do not wear out the rug in front of your mirror."

"I like Frenchmen because they never leave women alone."

"Frenchwomen are easy enough to get on with if one takes them out in the afternoon and amuses them in the evening and makes love to them at night and gives them no peace in the morning. But our blondes are not blonde like this."

"You blaspheme."

"I adore your sunburn and bruises and skinned knees and the prints of kisses and sun-strokes and the white skin under your hair—everything about you—your modesty and your consistency and your fingers without rings. And I have just passed the age when men believe that women give way to no one else."

I was holding her large red hand, satisfied that no disappointment was possible and no turning back imaginable. What blemishes were hidden by those imaginative pretexts I had always been accustomed to before, by the deceitfulness of gowns, the ingenuity of veils with filmy penumbra, and the very chemises that they hold to as tenaciously as a conjuror holds to his handkerchief!

Aïno had undertaken to enumerate all the fauna of her country for me, all the animals that live on the islands and in the lakes which correspond so exactly that the islands look as if they had been built with the earth that was dug out to make the lakes. On cliffs of manure, penguins ranged like jars in a pharmacy, beavers in silvery caps, great horned owls in white cotton-wool, seals oiled like cannon, brown bears that climb the last trees the earth brings forth, branching reindeer among the rocks, all the icy splendour, the pomp of the thaw and the magic of summer.

"Have you any whisky?" Aïno asked. "I like whisky, or mouth wash when there is no whisky, because it makes me feel as if I were sailing."

I saw, then, that she was drunk. But she did not laugh loudly, or bite her glass, or drop off her slippers under the table. She only crunched large watery pickles, wiped her lips on a paper napkin, and called me püppchen. It had come—the desirable moment when Polish women

talk about their stolen jewels, German women write poetry, American women insist that the negroes must be sent away, when negro women submit to engineers, when Spanish women object that "Lips are made to receive the Holy Communion," and English women demand money.

I wanted to take Aïno in my arms. She tried to stand, but she suddenly liquefied, slipped, and said, "I am not . . ." and fell on the floor with her arms crossed.

I laid her on her bed. She breathed painfully. Her smock split like a pod and I saw that her chest was well fastened to her shoulders with muscles hardened by rowing. I put a cold compress on her forehead. Her feet were far apart.

"No," she said.

Her eye-lids were stuck together like a new-born kitten's. She opened them and sat up and said that she was going to be sick.

Constellations rimmed with frost were already coming out in the sky. The accordion lost its breath now and then and writhed like a worm cut in half. Aïno and I were in the bow of the ferry. The other couples and the gulls were merry. We were not half-way to the island, but scraps of sentences came over the water. The tops of the firs were turning purple.

Aïno had been asleep until noon, except when she got up and drank two litres of water. She excavated my pockets. I threatened to throw the flask of Josephine brandy she discovered overboard. She raised eyes as innocent as Virginia's, and she only answered by thrusting her head at me like a goat.

I was still annoyed because she was escaping under cover of this drowsiness. Her silence was like the mute reproach of aborigines: bad pale-face brought fire-water. I decided to excuse myself.

"My country is the country of wine and moderation and sociabi . . ."

"One must never quarrel on Saint John's night," she interrupted.

The sun disappeared behind the bars of the tree-trunks, looking like a sliced beet. The ferry reached the dock. Two anchors fell from its nostrils. It was midnight. A strange hour began, orange with zebra stripes of russet. Columns of smoke rose over the lake. We walked down the path where fish-bones and papers and scraps of lace gradually became rarer. The island was lighted by bonfires burning on granite boulders, and there were fires floating on the water.

"Stop," Aïno said, near the spring that fortifies the view. "These fires are meant to imitate the sun and to encourage its return, and these rocks are sexual symbols . . ."

"I would rather have you call me püppchen," I said peevishly.

Couples were scattered about in the shadows, silent, unconscious of our presence, and separated from the world by the wall of their happiness. We brushed by them. Beyond, noisy games were going on, with songs and gun-shots. Under the service-trees, girls were dividing berries to read their omens. An odour of hot pine-needles and of baking bread came to us. Figures with their arms and legs wide jumped into the fires and

made wishes in the midst of the flames. Fantastic shadows strewed the ground around them.

I begged Aïno to tell me about herself. She was studious, she said, but visionary. The year before, she had been appointed a commissioner for fixing the boundary of the northern provinces, and she had treated with the bolsheviks. She had ordered a gold-braided uniform from Stockholm and a cocked hat with a vulture's feather, and she had put them on the day the treaty was signed.

She suddenly felt too comfortable and she noticed that her frock was unfastened.

"I only take off my clothes with my family," she said.

We sat down in the middle of a clearing in the wood. There was an odour of whey from the cows, and the sound of the tender moans with which the women encouraged their slow, large-handed companions. Some one fell into an invisible ravine and we heard a harsh cry and bones cracking like dead wood.

"What are you thinking of?" Aïno asked.

"The simple grandeur of this saturnalia moves my salacious, lying and rash French soul. I know the parks of New York. They are left open on August nights, and in the humid heat the grass becomes a temporary cemetery of coatless workmen and Irish girls. Sometimes a Neapolitan labourer finds his tenor voice again, and sometimes Slavs sing choruses. Even in winter couples stand out among the sheep and the clamour of the Salvation Army in Hyde Park, with their lips joined and fog up to their shoulders. Behind the motors of the Ritz in the Paseo de Recoletos in Madrid, muleteers

refresh themselves with muslin-skirted girls. In that damp pasture, Tahiti, women swim to the boats and climb on board. In the trenches of the fortifications around Paris, youths curled like cabbages . . ."

Aïno knotted her hands around my neck.

"You are an international boar," she said.

I took her in my arms. She was there all the rest of the night—that is to say, not quite ten minutes. After a rapid ablution, the sun was already hurrying up again.

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